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Mrs. UNWIN

PRIVATE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

WITH SEVERAL OF

HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS

IN THE POSSESSION OF HIS KINSMAN,

JOHN JOHNSON, LL.D.

RECTOR OF YAXHAM WITH WELBORNE IN NORFOLK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 9, 1785.

You wrong your own judgment when you represent it as not to be trusted; and mine, if you suppose that I have that opinion of it. Had you disapproved, I should have been hurt and mortified. No man's disapprobation would have hurt me more. Your favourable sentiments of my book must consequently give me pleasure in the same proportion. By the post, last Sunday, I had a letter from Lord Dartmouth, in which he

thanked me for my volume, of which he had read only a part. Of that part, however, he expresses himself in terms with which my authorship has abundant cause to be satisfied; and adds, that the specimen has made him impatient for the whole. I have likewise received a letter from a judicious friend of mine in London, and a man of fine taste, unknown to you, who speaks of it in the same language: Fortified by these cordials, I feel myself qualified to face the world without much anxiety, and delivered in a great measure from those fears which, I suppose, all men feel upon the like occasion.

My first volume I sent, as you may remember, to the Lord Chancellor, accompanied by a friendly but respectful epistle. His Lordship, however, thought it not worth his while to return me any answer, or to take the least notice of my present. I sent it also to Colman, manager of the Haymarket theatre, with whom

I once was intimate. He likewise proved too great a man to recollect me; and though he has published since, did not account it necessary to return the compliment. I have allowed myself to be a little pleased with an opportunity to show them that I resent their treatment of me, and have sent this book to neither of them. They, indeed, are the former friends to whom I particularly allude in my epistle to Mr. Hill; and it is possible that they may take to themselves a censure that they so well deserve. If not, it matters not; for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter.

If Mr. Bates has found it difficult to furnish you with a motto to your volumes, I have no reason to imagine that I shall do it easily. I shall not leave my books unransacked; but there is something so new and peculiar in the occasion that suggested your subject, that I question whether, in all the classics, can be

found a sentence suited to it. Our sins and follies, in this country, assume a shape that Heathen writers had never any opportunity to notice. They deified the dead, indeed, but not in the Temple of Jupiter. The new-made god had an altar of his own; and they conducted the ceremony without sacrilege or confusion. It is possible, however, and I think barely so, that somewhat may occur susceptible of accommodation to your purpose; and if it should, I shall be happy to serve you with it.

I told you, I believe, that the spinney has been cut down; and, though it may seem sufficient to have mentioned such an occurrence once, I cannot help recurring to the melancholy theme. Last night, at near nine o'clock, we entered it for the first time this summer. We had not walked many yards in it, before we perceived that this pleasant retreat is destined never to be a pleasant retreat again. In

one more year, the whole will be a thicket. That which was once the serpentine walk is now in a state of transformation, and is already become as woody as the rest. Poplars and elms without number are springing in the turf. They are now as high as the knee. Before the summer is ended, they will be twice as high; and the growth of another season will make them trees. It will then be impossible for any but a sportsman and his dog to penetrate it. The desolation of the whole scene is such, that it sunk our spirits. The ponds are dry. The circular one, in front of the hermitage, is filled with flags and rushes; so that if it contains any water, not a drop is visible. The weeping willow at the side of it, the only ornamental plant that has escaped the axe, is dead. The ivy and the moss, with which the hermitage was lined, are torn away; and the very mats that covered the benches have been stripped off, rent in tatters, and trodden under foot. So farewell, spinney; I have promised myself

that I will never enter it again. We have both prayed in it: you for me, and I for you. But it is desecrated from this time forth, and the voice of prayer will be heard in it no more. The fate of it in this respect, however deplorable, is not peculiar. The spot where Jacob anointed his pillar, and, which is more apposite, the spot once honoured with the presence of Him who dwelt in the bush, have long since suffered similar disgrace, and are become common ground.

There is great severity in the application of the text you mention—I am *their music*. But it is not the worse for that. We both approve it highly. The other in Ezekiel does not seem quite so pat. The prophet complains that his word was to the people like a pleasant song, heard with delight, but soon forgotten. At the commemoration, I suppose that the word is nothing, but the music all in all. The Bible, however, will abundantly supply you with ap-

plicable passages. All passages, indeed, that animadvert upon the profanation of God's house and worship, seem to present themselves upon the occasion.

Accept our love and best wishes; and believe me, my dear friend, with warm and true affection,

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 6, 1785.

I found your account of what you experienced in your state of maiden authorship very entertaining, because very natural. I suppose that no man ever made his first sally from the press without a conviction that all eyes and ears would be engaged to

attend him; at least, without a thousand anxieties lest they should not. But, however arduous and interesting such an enterprise may be in the first instance, it seems to me that our feelings on the occasion soon become obtuse. I can answer, at least, for one. Mine are by no means what they were when I published my first volume. I am even so indifferent to the matter, that I can truly assert myself guiltless of the very idea of my book sometimes whole days together. God knows that my mind having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world, and its opinion of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush. Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavoured to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God

gave me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain. Accordingly, I have mingled much truth with much trifle; and such truths as deserved, at least, to be clad as well and as handsomely as I could clothe them. If the world approve me not, so much the worse for them, but not for me. I have only endeavoured to serve them, and the loss will be their own. And as to their commendations, if I should chance to win them, I feel myself equally invulnerable there. The view that I have had of myself, for many years, has been so truly humiliating, that I think the praises of all mankind could not hurt me. God knows that I speak my present sense of the matter at least most truly, when I say, that the admiration of creatures like myself seems to me a weapon the least dangerous that my worst enemy could employ against me. I am fortified against it by such solidity of real self-abasement, that I deceive myself most egregiously if I do not heartily des-

pise it. Praise belongeth to God; and I seem to myself to covet it no more than I covet divine honours. Could I assuredly hope that God would at last deliver me, I should have reason to thank him for all that I have suffered, were it only for the sake of this single fruit of my affliction,—that it has taught me how much more contemptible I am in myself than I ever before suspected, and has reduced my former share of self-knowledge (of which at that time I had a tolerable good opinion) to a mere nullity, in comparison with what I have acquired since. Self is a subject of inscrutable misery and mischief, and can never be studied to so much advantage as in the dark: for as the bright beams of the sun seem to impart a beauty to the foulest objects, and can make even a dunghill smile, so the light of God's countenance, vouchsafed to a fallen creature, so sweetens him and softens him for the time, that he seems, both to others and to himself, to have nothing savage or

sordid about him. But the heart is a nest of serpents, and will be such while it continues to beat. If God cover the mouth of that nest with his hand, they are hush and snug; but if he withdraw his hand, the whole family lift up their heads and hiss, and are as active and venomous as ever. This I always professed to believe from the time that I had embraced the truth, but never knew it as I know it now. To what end I have been made to know it as I do, whether for the benefit of others or for my own, or for both, or for neither, will appear hereafter.

What I have written leads me naturally to the mention of a matter that I had forgot. I should blame nobody, not even my intimate friends, and those who have the most favourable opinion of me, were they to charge the publication of John Gilpin, at the end of so much solemn and serious truth, to the score of the author's vanity; and to suspect that,

however sober I may be upon proper occasions, I have yet that itch of popularity that would not suffer me to sink my title to a jest that had been so successful. But the case is not such. When I sent the copy of the *Task* to Johnson, I desired, indeed, Mr. Unwin to ask him the question, whether or not he would choose to make it a part of the volume? This I did merely with a view to promote the sale of it. Johnson answered, "By all means." Some months afterward, he enclosed a note to me in one of my packets, in which he expressed a change of mind, alleging, that to print John Gilpin would only be to print what had been hackneyed in every magazine, in every shop, and at the corner of every street. I answered, that I desired to be entirely governed by his opinion; and that if he chose to wave it, I should be better pleased with the omission. Nothing more passed between us upon the subject, and I concluded that I should never

have the immortal honour of being generally known as the author of John Gilpin. In the last packet, however, down came John, very fairly printed, and equipped for public appearance. The business having taken this turn, I concluded that Johnson had adopted my original thought, that it might prove advantageous to the sale; and as he had had the trouble and expense of printing it, I corrected the copy, and let it pass. Perhaps, however, neither the book nor the writer may be made much more famous by John's good company, than they would have been without it; for the volume has never yet been advertised, nor can I learn that Johnson intends it. He fears the expense, and the consequence must be prejudicial. Many who would purchase will remain uninformed: but I am perfectly content.

I have considered your motto, and like the

purport of it: but the best, because the most laconic manner of it, seems to be this—

Cùm talis sis, sis noster;

utinam being, in my account of it, unnecessary.

Yours, my dear friend, most truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 27, 1785.

I did very warmly and very sincerely thank Mr. Bacon for his most friendly and obliging letter; but having written my acknowledgments in the cover, I suppose that they escaped your notice. I should not have contented myself with transmitting them through your hands, but should have addressed them immediately to himself, but that I foresaw plainly this inconvenience: that, in writing to

him on such an occasion, I must almost unavoidably make self and self's book the subject. Therefore it was, as Mrs. Unwin can vouch for me, that I denied myself that pleasure. I place this matter now in the van of all that I have to say: first, that you may not overlook it; secondly, because, it is uppermost in my consideration; and thirdly, because I am impatient to be exculpated from the seeming omission.

You told me, I think, that you seldom read the papers. In our last we had an extract from Johnson's Diary, or whatever else he called it. It is certain that the publisher of it is neither much a friend to the cause of religion nor to the author's memory; for, by the specimen of it that has reached us, it seems to contain only such stuff as has a direct tendency to expose both to ridicule. His prayers for the dead, and his minute account of the rigour with which he observed church fasts, whether he

drank tea or coffee, whether with sugar or without, and whether one or two dishes of either, are the most important items to be found in this childish register of the great Johnson, supreme dictator in the chair of literature, and almost a driveller in his closet; a melancholy witness to testify how much of the wisdom of this world may consist with almost infantine ignorance of the affairs of a better. I remember a good man at Huntingdon, who, I doubt not, is now with God, and he also kept a Diary. After his death, through the neglect or foolish wantonness of his executors, it came abroad for the amusement of his neighbours. All the town saw it, and all the town found it highly diverting. It contained much more valuable matter than the poor Doctor's Journal seems to do; but it contained also a faithful record of all his deliverances from wind (for he was much troubled with flatulence), by whatever vent it escaped him; together with pious acknowledgments of the mercy. There is cer-

tainly a call for gratitude, whatsoever benefit we receive; and it is equally certain, that we ought to be humbled under the recollection of our least offences: but it would have been as well if neither my old friend had recorded his eructations, nor the Doctor his dishes of sugarless tea, or the dinner at which he ate too much. I wonder, indeed, that any man of such learned eminence as Johnson, who knew that every word he uttered was deemed oracular, and that every scratch of his pen was accounted a treasure, should leave behind him what he would have blushed to exhibit while he lived. If Virgil would have burnt his Æneid, how much more reason had these good men to have burnt their Journals.

Mr. Perry will leave none such behind him. He is dying, as I suppose you have heard. Dr. Kerr, who, I think, has visited him twice or thrice, desired at his last visit to be no more sent for. He pronounced his case hope-

less; for that his thigh and leg must mortify. He is, however, in a most comfortable frame of mind. So long as he thought it possible that he might recover, he was much occupied with a review of his ministry; and under a deep impression of his deficiencies in that function, assured Mr. R——— that he intended, when he should enter upon it again, to be much more diligent than he had been. He was conscious, he said, that many fine things had been said of him; but that, though he trusted he had found grace so to walk as not to dishonour his office, he was conscious, at the same time, how little he deserved them. This, with much more to the same purport, passed on Sunday last. On Thursday, Mr. R—— was with him again; and at that time Mr. Perry knew that he must die. The rules and cautions that he had before prescribed to himself, he then addressed directly to his visitor. He exhorted him, by all means, to be earnest and affectionate in his applica-

tions to the unconverted, and not less solicitous to admonish the careless, with a head full of light, and a heart alienated from the ways of God; and those, no less, who being wise in their own conceit, were much occupied in matters above their reach, and very little with subjects of immediate and necessary concern. He added, that he had received from God, during his illness, other views of sin than he had ever been favoured with before; and exhorted him by all means to be watchful. Mr. R——— being himself the reporter of these conversations, it is to be supposed that they impressed him. Admonitions from such lips, and in a dying time too, must have their weight; and it is well with the hearer, when the instruction abides with him. But our own view of these matters is, I believe, that alone which can effectually serve us. The representations of a dying man may strike us at the time; and, if they stir up in us a spirit of self-examination and enquiry, so

that we rest not till we have made his views and experience our own, it is well; otherwise, the wind that passes us is hardly sooner gone, than the effect of the most serious exhortations.

Farewell, my friend. My views of my spiritual state are, as you say, altered; but they are yet far from being such as they must be, before I can be enduringly comforted.

Yours, unfeignedly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 24, 1785.

I am sorry that an excursion, which you would otherwise have found so agreeable, was attended with so great a drawback upon its pleasures as Miss Cunningham's illness must

needs have been. Had she been able to bathe in the sea, it might have been of service to her, but I knew her weakness and delicacy of habit to be such as did not encourage any very sanguine hopes that the regimen would suit her. I remember Southampton well, having spent much time there; but though I was young, and had no objections on the score of conscience either to dancing or cards, I never was in the assembly-room in my life. I never was fond of company, and especially disliked it in the country. A walk to Netley Abbey, or to Freemantle, or to Redbridge, or a book by the fire-side, had always more charms for me than any other amusement that the place afforded. I was also a sailor, and being of Sir Thomas Hesketh's party, who was himself born one, was often pressed into the service. But though I gave myself an air and wore trowsers, I had no genuine right to that honour, disliking much to be occupied in great waters, unless in the finest weather. How they continue to

elude the wearisomeness that attends a sea life, who take long voyages, you know better than I; but for my own part, I seldom have sailed so far as from Hampton river to Portsmouth, without feeling the confinement irksome, and sometimes to a degree that was almost insupportable. There is a certain perverseness, of which I believe all men have a share, but of which no man has a larger share than I — I mean that temper, or humour, or whatever it is to be called, that indisposes us to a situation, though not unpleasant in itself, merely because we cannot get out of it. I could not endure the room in which I now write, were I conscious that the door were locked. In less than five minutes I should feel myself a prisoner, though I can spend hours in it, under an assurance that I may leave it when I please, without experiencing any tedium at all. It was for this reason, I suppose, that the yacht was always disagreeable to me. Could I have stepped out of it into a corn-field or a garden,

I should have liked it well enough; but being surrounded with water, I was as much confined in it as if I had been surrounded by fire, and did not find that it made me any adequate compensation for such an abridgement of my liberty. I make little doubt but Noah was glad when he was enlarged from the ark; and we are sure that Jonah was, when he came out of the fish; and so was I to escape from the good sloop the Harriet.

In my last, I wrote you word that Mr. Perry was given over by his friends, and pronounced a dead man by his physician. Just when I had reached the end of the foregoing paragraph, he came in. His errand hither was to bring two letters, which I enclose; one is to yourself, in which he will give you, I doubt not, such an account both of his body and mind, as will make all that I might say upon those subjects superfluous. The only consequences of his illness seem to be, that he looks a little pale,

and that though always a most excellent man, he is still more angelic than he was. Illness sanctified is better than health. But I know a man who has been a sufferer by a worse illness than his, almost these fourteen years, and who at present is only the worse for it.

Mr. Scott called upon us yesterday; he is much inclined to set up a Sunday school, if he can raise a fund for the purpose. Mr. Jones has had one some time at Clifton, and Mr. Unwin writes me word that he has been thinking of nothing else day and night, for a fortnight. It is a wholesome measure, that seems to bid fair to be pretty generally adopted, and, for the good effects that it promises, deserves well to be so. I know not, indeed, while the spread of the gospel continues so limited as it is, how a reformation of manners, in the lower class of mankind, can be brought to pass; or by what other means the utter abolition of all principle among them, moral as

well as religious, can possibly be prevented. Heathenish parents can only bring up heathenish children; an assertion nowhere oftener or more clearly illustrated than at Olney; where children, seven years of age, infest the streets every evening with curses and with songs, to which it would be unseemly to give their proper epithet. Such urchins as these could not be so diabolically accomplished, unless by the connivance of their parents. It is well, indeed, if in some instances their parents be not themselves their instructors. Judging by their proficiency, one can hardly suppose any other. It is, therefore, doubtless an act of the greatest charity, to snatch them out of such hands, before the inveteracy of the evil shall have made it desperate. Mr. Teedon, I should imagine, will be employed as a teacher, should this expedient be carried into effect. I know not, at least, that we have any other person among us so well qualified for the service. He is indisputably a Christian man, and mise-

rably poor, whose revenues need improvement, as much as any children in the world can possibly need instruction.

Believe me, my dear friend,

With true affection, yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Oct. 11, 1785.

You began your letter with an apology for long silence, and it is now incumbent upon me to do the same; and the rather, as your kind invitation to Wargrave entitled you to a speedier answer. The truth is, that I am become, if not a man of business, yet a busy man, and have been engaged almost this twelvemonth in a work that will allow of no long interruption. On this account it was impossible for me to accept your obliging summons;

and having only to tell you that I could not, it appeared to me as a matter of no great moment, whether you received that intelligence soon or late.

You do me justice, when you ascribe my printed epistle to you, to my friendship for you; though, in fact, it was equally owing to the opinion that I have of yours for me. Having, in one part or other of my two volumes, distinguished by name the majority of those few for whom I entertain a friendship, it seemed to me that it would be unjustifiable negligence to omit yourself; and if I took that step without communicating to you my intention, it was only to gratify myself the more, with the hope of surprising you agreeably. Poets are dangerous persons to be acquainted with, especially if a man have that in his character that promises to shine in verse. To that very circumstance it is owing, that you are now figuring away in mine. For, notwithstanding what you

say on the subject of honesty and friendship, that they are not splendid enough for public celebration, I must still think of them as I did before,—that there are no qualities of the mind and heart that can deserve it better. I can, at least for my own part, look round about upon the generality, and, while I see them deficient in those grand requisites of a respectable character, am not able to discover that they possess any other, of value enough to atone for the want of them.

I beg that you will present my respects to Mrs. Hill, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 16, 1785.

To have sent a child to heaven is a great honour and a great blessing, and your feelings on such an occasion may well be such as render you rather an object of congratulation than of condolence. And were it otherwise, yet, having yourself free access to all the sources of genuine consolation, I feel that it would be little better than impertinence in me to suggest any. An escape from a life of suffering to a life of happiness and glory, is such a deliverance as leaves no room for the sorrow of survivors, unless they sorrow for themselves. We cannot, indeed, lose what we love without regretting it; but a Christian is in possession of such alleviations of that regret, as the world knows nothing of. Their beloveds, when they die, go they know not whither; and if they suppose them, as they generally do, in a state of happiness, they have

yet but an indifferent prospect of joining them in that state hereafter. But it is not so with you. You both know whither your beloved is gone, and you know that you shall follow her; and you know also that in the mean time she is incomparably happier than yourself. So far, therefore, as she is concerned, nothing has come to pass but what was most fervently to be wished. I do not know that I am singularly selfish; but one of the first thoughts that your account of Miss Cunningham's dying moments and departure suggested to me, had self for its object. It struck me that she was not born when I sank into darkness, and that she is gone to heaven before I have emerged again. What a lot, said I to myself, is mine! whose helmet is fallen from my head, and whose sword from my hand, in the midst of the battle; who was stricken down to the earth when I least expected it; who had just begun to cry victory! when I was defeated myself; and who have been trampled upon so long, that others have

had time to conquer and to receive their crown, before I have been able to make one successful effort to escape from under the feet of my enemies. It seemed to me, therefore, that if you mourned for Miss Cunningham, you gave those tears to her to which I only had a right, and I was almost ready to exclaim, "I am the dead, and not she; you misplace your sorrows." —I have sent you the history of my mind on this subject without any disguise; if it does not please you, pardon it at least, for it is the truth. The unhappy, I believe, are always selfish. I have, I confess, my comfortable moments; but they are like the morning dew, so suddenly do they pass away and are gone.

It should seem a matter of small moment to me, who never hear him, whether Mr. Scott shall be removed from Olney to the Lock, or no; yet, in fact, I believe that few interest themselves more in that event than I. He knows my manner of life, and has ceased long

since to wonder at it. A new minister would need information, and I am not ambitious of having my tale told to a stranger. He would also, perhaps, think it necessary to assail me with arguments, which would be more profitably disposed of, if he should discharge them against the walls of a tower. I wish, therefore, for the continuance of Mr. Scott. He honoured me so far as to consult me twice upon the subject. At our first interview, he seemed to discern but little in the proposal that entitled it to his approbation. But when he came the second time, we observed that his views of it were considerably altered. He was warm—he was animated; difficulties had disappeared, and allurements had started up in their place. I could not say to him, Sir, you are naturally of a sanguine temper; and he that is so, cannot too much distrust his own judgment;—but I am glad that he will have the benefit of yours. It seems to me, however, that the minister who shall

re-illumine the faded glories of the Lock, must not only practise great fidelity in his preaching, to which task Mr. Scott is perfectly equal, but must do it with much address; and it is hardly worth while to observe, that his excellence does not lie that way, because he is ever ready to acknowledge it himself. But I have nothing to suggest upon this subject that will be new to you, and therefore drop it; the rather, indeed, because I may reasonably suppose that by this time the point is decided.

I have reached that part of my paper which I generally fill with intelligence, if I can find any: but there is a great dearth of it at present; and Mr. Scott has probably anticipated me in all the little that there is. Lord P—— having dismissed Mr. Jones from his service, the people of Turvey have burnt him [Mr. Jones] in effigy, with a bundle of quick-thorn under his arm. What consequences are to

follow his dismission, is uncertain. His Lordship threatens him with a lawsuit; and unless their disputes can be settled by arbitration, it is not unlikely that the profits of poor Jones's stewardship will be melted down at Westminster. He has laboured hard, and no doubt with great integrity, and has been rewarded with hard words and scandalous treatment.

Mr. Scott (which perhaps he may not have told you, for he did not mention it here) has met with similar treatment at a place in this country called Hinksey, or by some such name.* But he suffered in effigy for the Gospel's sake;—a cause in which I presume

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* The Rev. John Scott, to whom this passage has been communicated, informs the Editor, that the name of the place in which his late father experienced this treatment was not *Hinskey*, but *Tingewick*, near Buckinghaui.

he would not be unwilling, if need were, to be burnt *in propriâ personâ.*

I have nothing to add, but that we are well, and remember you with much affection; and that I am, my dear friend,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 5, 1785.

Were it with me as in days past, you should have no cause to complain of my tardiness in writing. You supposed that I would have accepted your packet as an answer to my last; and so indeed I did, and felt myself overpaid; but though a debtor, and deeply indebted too, had not wherewithal to discharge the arrear. You do not know nor suspect

what a conquest I sometimes gain, when I only take up the pen with a design to write. Many a time have I resolved to say to all my few correspondents,—I take my leave of you for the present; if I live to see better days, you shall hear from me again.—I have been driven to the very verge of this measure; and, even upon this occasion, was upon the point of desiring Mrs. Unwin to become my substitute. She, indeed, offered to write in my stead; but fearing that you would understand me to be even worse than I am, I rather chose to answer for myself.—So much for a subject with which I could easily fill the sheet, but with which I have occupied too great a part of it already. It is time that I should thank you, and return you Mrs. Unwin's thanks for your Narrative.* I told you,

* Authentic Narrative of some remarkable and interesting particulars in the Life of * * [Mr. Newton].

in my last, in what manner I felt myself affected by the abridgment of it contained in your letter; and have therefore only to add, upon that point, that the impression made upon me by the relation at large was of a like kind. I envy all that live in the enjoyment of a good hope, and much more all who die to enjoy the fruit of it: but I recollect myself in time; I resolved not to touch that chord again, and yet was just going to trespass upon my resolution. As to the rest, your history of your happy niece is just what it should be,—clear, affectionate, and plain; worthy of her, and worthy of yourself. How much more beneficial to the world might such a memorial of an unknown, but pious and believing child, eventually prove, would the supercilious learned condescend to read it, than the history of all the kings and heroes that ever lived! But the world has its objects of admiration, and God has objects of his love. Those make a noise and perish; and these

weep silently for a short season, and live for ever. I had rather have been your niece, or the writer of her story, than any Cæsar that ever thundered.

The vanity of human attainments was never so conspicuously exemplified as in the present day. The sagacious moderns make discoveries, which, how useful they may prove to themselves I know not; certainly they do no honour to the ancients. Homer and Virgil have enjoyed (if the dead have any such enjoyments) an unrivalled reputation as poets, through a long succession of ages: but it is now shrewdly suspected that Homer did not compose the poems for which he has been so long applauded; and it is even asserted by a certain Robert Heron, Esq., that Virgil never wrote a line worth reading. He is a pitiful plagiary; he is a servile imitator, a bungler in his plan, and has not a thought in his whole work that will bear

examination. In short, he is any thing but what the literati for two thousand years have taken him to be—a man of genius and a fine writer. I fear that Homer's case is desperate. After the lapse of so many generations, it would be a difficult matter to elucidate a question which time and modern ingenuity together combine to puzzle. And I suppose that it were in vain for an honest plain man to enquire, If Homer did not write the Iliad and the Odyssey, who did? The answer would undoubtedly be—It is no matter; he did not: which is all that I undertook to prove. For Virgil, however, there still remains some consolation. The very same Mr. Heron, who finds no beauties in the Æneid, discovers not a single instance of the sublime in Scripture. Particularly he says, speaking of the prophets, that Ezekiel, although the filthiest of all writers, is the best of them. He, therefore, being the first of the learned who has reprobated even the

stile of the Scriptures, may possibly make the fewer proselytes to his judgment of the Heathen writer. For my own part, at least, had I been accustomed to doubt whether the Æneid were a noble composition or not, this gentleman would at once have decided the question for me; and I should have been immediately assured, that a work must necessarily abound in beauties that had the happiness to displease a censurer of the Word of God. What enterprizes will not an inordinate passion for fame suggest? It prompted one man to fire the Temple of Ephesus; another, to fling himself into a volcano; and now has induced this wicked and unfortunate 'squire either to deny his own feelings, or to publish to all the world that he has no feelings at all.*

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* The playful spirit in which the writer adverts to this subject appears to have yielded afterwards to a

This being the 5th of November, is the worst of all days in the year for letter-writing. Continually called upon to remember the bonfire, one is apt to forget every thing else. The boys at Olney have likewise a very enter-

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feeling of indignation; the following lines in his own hand-writing having been found by the Editor amongst his papers:---

On the Author of Letters on Literature.

The Genius of th' Augustan age
His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,
And bursting with heroic rage,
When literary Heron appear'd,

Thou hast, he cried, like him of old
Who set th' Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

And for traducing Virgil's name
Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd.

taining sport, which commences annually upon this day. They call it Hockey; and it consists in dashing each other with mud, and the windows also, so that I am forced to rise now and then, and to threaten them with a horse-whip to preserve our own. We know that the Roman boys whipped tops, trundled the hoop, and played at tennis; but I believe we nowhere read that they delighted in these filthy aspersions: I am inclined, therefore, to give to the slovenly but ingenious youths of Olney full credit for the invention. It will be well if the Sunday-school may civilize them to a taste for more refined amusements.

Mr. Jones and Lord P— have parted at last; and, after many bickerings, have parted upon amicable terms. Jones having delivered in an honest account, refused to falsify it to the prejudice of his own reputation, and his master threatened him with a lawsuit. But finding him inflexible, and not to be intimidated, he gave him his hand, treated him as a friend,

and admitted him into his confidence. It is well for little folks that great folks are apt to be somewhat capricious; they would otherwise, perhaps, be at all times insolent and oppressive alike.

Mr. Scott is pestered with anonymous letters, but he conducts himself wisely; and the question whether he shall go to the Lock or not, seems hasting to a decision in the affirmative.

We are tolerably well; and Mrs. Unwin adds to mine her affectionate remembrances of yourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 7, 1785.

Your time being so much occupied as to leave you no opportunity for a word more than the needful, I am the more obliged to you that you have found leisure even for that, and thank you for the note above acknowledged.

I know not at present what subject I could enter upon, by which I should not put you to an expense of moments that you can ill spare: I have often been displeased when a neighbour of mine, being himself an idle man, has delivered himself from the burthen of a vacant hour or two, by coming to repose his idleness upon me. Not to incur, therefore, and deservedly, the blame that I have charged upon him, by interrupting you, who are certainly a busy man, whatever may be the case with

myself, I shall only add that I am, with my respects to Mrs. Hill,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 3, 1785.

I am glad to hear that there is such a demand for your last Narrative. If I may judge of their general utility by the effect that they have heretofore had upon me, there are few things more edifying than death-bed memoirs. They interest every reader, because they speak of a period at which all must arrive, and afford a solid ground of encouragement to survivors to expect the same, or similar support and comfort, when it shall be their turn to die.

I also am employed in writing narrative, but

not so useful. Employment, however, and with the pen, is, through habit, become essential to my well-being; and to produce always original poems, especially of considerable length, is not so easy. For some weeks after I had finished the Task, and sent away the last sheet corrected, I was through necessity idle, and suffered not a little in my spirits for being so. One day, being in such distress of mind as was hardly supportable, I took up the Iliad; and merely to divert attention, and with no more preconception of what I was then entering upon, than I have at this moment of what I shall be doing this day twenty years hence, translated the twelve first lines of it. The same necessity pressing me again, I had recourse to the same expedient, and translated more. Every day bringing its occasion for employment with it, every day consequently added something to the work; till at last I began to reflect thus:—The Iliad and the Odyssey together consist of about forty thousand verses. To translate these forty thou-

sand verses will furnish me with occupation for a considerable time. I have already made some progress, and I find it a most agreeable amusement. Homer, in point of purity, is a most blameless writer; and, though he was not an enlightened man, has interspersed many great and valuable truths throughout both his poems. In short, he is in all respects a most venerable old gentleman, by an acquaintance with whom no man can disgrace himself. The literati are all agreed to a man, that, although Pope has given us two pretty poems under Homer's titles, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner. I will try, therefore, whether I cannot copy him somewhat more happily myself. I have at least the advantage of Pope's faults and failings, which, like so many buoys upon a dangerous coast, will serve me to steer by, and will make my chance for success more probable. These, and many other considerations, but especially a mind that abhorred a

vacuum as its chief bane, impelled me so effectually to the work, that ere long I mean to publish proposals for a subscription to it, having advanced so far as to be warranted in doing so. I have connexions, and no few such, by means of which I have the utmost reason to expect that a brisk circulation may be procured; and if it should prove a profitable enterprise, the profit will not accrue to a man who may be said not to want it. It is a business such as it will not, indeed, lie much in your way to promote; but, among your numerous connexions, it is possible that you may know some who would sufficiently interest themselves in such a work to be not unwilling to subscribe to it. I do not mean—far be it from me—to put you upon making hazardous applications, where you might possibly incur a refusal, that would give you though but a moment's pain. You know best your own opportunities and powers in such a cause. If you can do but little, I shall esteem it much; and if you can do no-

thing, I am sure that it will not be for want of a will.

I have lately had three visits from my old schoolfellow Mr. Bagot, a brother of Lord Bagot, and of Mr. Chester of Chicheley. At his last visit he brought his wife with him, a most amiable woman, to see Mrs. Unwin. I told him my purpose, and my progress. He received the news with great pleasure; immediately subscribed a draft of twenty pounds; and promised me his whole heart, and his whole interest, which lies principally among people of the first fashion.*

My correspondence has lately also been renewed with my dear cousin Lady Hesketh, whom I ever loved as a sister, (for we were in a manner brought up together,) and who writes to me as affectionately as if she were so. She also enters into my views and interests upon this occasion with a warmth

that gives me great encouragement. The circle of *her* acquaintance is likewise very extensive; and I have no doubt that she will exert her influence to its utmost possibilities among them. I have other strings to my bow, (perhaps, as a translator of Homer, I should say, to my lyre,) which I cannot here enumerate; but, upon the whole, my prospect seems promising enough. I have not yet consulted Johnson upon the occasion, but intend to do it soon.

My spirits are somewhat better than they were. In the course of the last month, I have perceived a very sensible amendment. The hope of better days seems again to dawn upon me; and I have now and then an intimation, though slight and transient, that God has not abandoned me for ever.

Having been for some years troubled with an inconvenient stomach; and lately, with a

stomach that will digest nothing without help; and we having reached the bottom of our own medical skill, into which we have dived to little or no purpose; I have at length consented to consult Dr. Kerr, and expect to see him in a day or two. Engaged as I am, and am likely to be, so long as I am capable of it, in writing for the press, I cannot well afford to entertain a malady that is such an enemy to all mental operations.

This morning is beautiful, and tempts me forth into the garden. It is all the walk that I can have at this season, but not all the exercise. I ring a peal every day upon the dumb-bells.

I am, my dear friend, most truly,

Yours and Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 10, 1785.

What you say of my last volume gives me the sincerest pleasure. I have heard a like favourable report of it from several different quarters, but never any (for obvious reasons) that has gratified me more than yours. I have a relish for moderate praise, because it bids fair to be judicious; but praise excessive, such as our poor friend ——'s, (I have an uncle also who celebrates me exactly in the same language;) — such praise is rather too big for an ordinary swallow. I set down nine-tenths of it to the account of family partiality. I know no more than you what kind of a market my book has found; but this I believe, that had not Henderson died, and had it been worth my while to have given him an hundred pounds to have read it in public, it would have been more popular than it is. I

am at least very unwilling to esteem John Gilpin as better worth than all the rest that I have written, and he has been popular enough.

Your sentiments of Pope's Homer agree perfectly with those of every competent judge with whom I have at any time conversed about it. I never saw a copy so unlike the original. There is not, I believe, in all the world to be found an uninspired poem so simple as those of Homer; nor in all the world a poem more bedizened with ornaments than Pope's translation of them. Accordingly, the sublime of Homer in the hands of Pope becomes bloated and tumid, and his description tawdry. Neither had Pope the faintest conception of those exquisite discriminations of character for which Homer is so remarkable. All his persons, and equally upon all occasions, speak in an inflated and strutting phraseology, as Pope has managed them; although in the original, the dignity of their utterance, even when they are

most majestic, consists principally in the simplicity of their sentiments and of their language. Another censure I must needs pass upon our Anglo-Grecian, out of many that obtrude themselves upon me, but for which I have neither time to spare, nor room; which is, that with all his great abilities he was defective in his feelings to a degree that some passages in his own poems make it difficult to account for. No writer more pathetic than Homer, because none more natural; and because none less natural than Pope in his version of Homer, therefore than he none less pathetic. But I shall tire you with a theme with which I would not wish to cloy you beforehand.

If the great change in my experience, of which you express so lively an expectation, should take place, and whenever it shall take place, you may securely depend upon receiving the first notice of it. But whether you

come with congratulations, or whether without them, I need not say that you and yours will always be most welcome here. Mrs. Unwin's love both to yourself and to Mrs. Newton joins itself as usual, and as warmly as usual, to that of

Yours, my dear friend,

Affectionately and faithfully,

W. C.

The following this moment occurs to me as a possible motto for the Messiah, if you do not think it too sharp:—

——Nunquam inducunt animum cantare, *rogati*; *Injussi*, nunquam desistunt.——

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 14, 1786.

My proposals are already printed. I ought rather to say, that they are ready for printing; having near ten days ago returned the correction of the proof. But a cousin of mine, and one who will, I dare say, be very active in my literary cause, (I mean General Cowper,) having earnestly recommended it to me to annex a specimen, I have accordingly sent him one, extracted from the latter part of the last book of the Iliad, and consisting of a hundred and seven lines. I chose to extract it from that part of the poem, because if the reader should happen to find himself content with it, he will naturally be encouraged by it to hope well of the part preceding. Every man who can do any thing in the translating way is pretty sure to set off with spirit; but in works of such a length, there is always danger of flagging near the close.

My subscription, I hope, will be more powerfully promoted than subscriptions generally are. I have a warm and affectionate friend in Lady Hesketh; and one equally disposed, and even still more able to serve me, in the General above-mentioned. The Bagot family all undertake my cause with ardour; and I have several others, of whose ability and goodwill I could not doubt without doing them injustice. It will, however, be necessary to bestow yet much time on the revisal of this work, for many reasons; and especially, because he who contends with Pope upon Homer's ground, can, of all writers, least afford to be negligent.

Mr. Scott brought me as much as he could remember of a kind message from Lord Dartmouth; but it was rather imperfectly delivered. Enough of it, however, came to hand to convince me that his Lordship takes a friendly interest in my success. When his Lordship

and I sat side by side, on the sixth form at Westminster, we little thought that in process of time, one of us was ordained to give a new translation of Homer. Yet, at that very time, it seems, I was laying the foundation of this superstructure.

Much love upon all accounts, to you and yours.

Adieu, my friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 18, 1786.

I feel myself truly obliged to you for the leave that you give me, to be less frequent in writing, and more brief than heretofore. I have a long work upon my hands; and standing engaged to the public (for by this time

I suppose my subscription papers to be gone abroad, not only for the performance of it, but for the performance of it in a reasonable time, it seems necessary to me not to intermit it often. My correspondence has also lately been renewed with several of my relations, and unavoidably engrosses now and then, one of the few opportunities that I can find for writing. I nevertheless intend, in the exchange of letters with you, to be as regular as I can be, and to use, like a friend, the friendly allowance that you have made me.

My reason for giving notice of an Odyssey as well as an Iliad, was this:—I feared that the public, being left to doubt whether I should ever translate the former, would be unwilling to treat with me for the latter; which they would be apt to consider as an odd volume, and unworthy to stand upon their shelves alone. It is hardly probable, however, that I should begin the Odyssey for some months to

come, being now closely engaged in the revisal of my translation of the Iliad, which I compare, as I go, most minutely with the original. One of the great defects of Pope's translation is, that it is licentious. To publish, therefore, a translation, now, that should be at all chargeable with the same fault, that were not indeed as close and as faithful as possible, would be only *actum agere*, and had therefore better be left undone. Whatever be said of mine when it shall appear, it shall never be said that it is not faithful.

I thank you heartily, both for your wishes and prayers, that should a disappointment occur, I may not be too much hurt by it. Strange as it may seem to say it, and unwilling as I should be to say it to any person less candid than yourself, I will nevertheless say, that I have not entered on this work, unconnected as it must needs appear with the interests of the cause of God, without the direction

of his providence, nor altogether unassisted by him in the performance of it. Time will show to what it ultimately tends. I am inclined to believe that it has a tendency to which I myself am, at present, perfectly a stranger. Be that as it may, He knows my frame, and will consider that I am but dust; dust, into the bargain, that has been so trampled under foot and beaten, that a storm, less violent than an unsuccessful issue of such a business might occasion, would be sufficient to blow me quite away. But I will tell you honestly, I have no fears upon the subject. My predecessor has given me every advantage.

As I know not to what end this my present occupation may finally lead, so neither did I know, when I wrote it, or at all suspect, one valuable end, at least, that was to be answered by the Task. It has pleased God to prosper it; and being composed in blank verse, it is likely to prove as seasonable an introduction to a

blank verse Homer, by the same hand, as any that could have been devised; yet when I wrote the last line of the Task, I as little suspected that I should ever engage in a version of the old Asiatic tale, as you do now.

I should choose for your general motto—

Carmina tum melius, cùm venerit ipse, canemus.

For vol. I.

Unum pro multis dabitur caput.

For vol. II.

Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo.

It seems to me that you cannot have better than these.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 1, 1786.

I have made you wait long for an answer, and am now obliged to write in a hurry. But lest my longer silence should alarm you, hurried as I am, still I write. I told you, if I mistake not, that the circle of my correspondence has lately been enlarged; and it seems still encreasing, which, together with my poetical business, makes an *hour* a *momentous* affair. Pardon an unintentional pun. You need not fear for my health. It suffers nothing by my employment.

We, who in general see no company, are at present in expectation of a great deal; at least, if three different visits may be called so. Mr. and Mrs. Powley, in the first place, are preparing for a journey southward. She is far from well, but thinks herself well

enough to travel, and feels an affectionate impatience for another sight of Olney.

In the next place, we expect, as soon as the season shall turn up bright and warm, General Cowper and his son. I have not seen him these twenty years and upwards; but our intercourse having been lately revived, is likely to become closer, warmer, and more intimate than ever.

Lady Hesketh also comes down in June; and if she can be accommodated with any thing in the shape of a dwelling at Olney, talks of making it always, in part, her summer residence. It has pleased God that I should, like Joseph, be put into a well; and because there are no Midianites in the way to deliver me, therefore my friends are coming down into the well to see me.

I wish you, we both wish you, all happiness in your new habitation: at least, you

will be sure to find the situation more commodious. I thank you for all your hints concerning my work, which shall be duly attended to. You may assure all whom it may concern, that all offensive elisions will be done away. With Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, I remain, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 20, 1786.

Within this hour arrived three sets of your new publication,* for which we sincerely thank you. We have breakfasted since they came, and consequently, as you may suppose,

* Messiah.

have neither of us had yet an opportunity to make ourselves acquainted with the contents. I shall be happy (and when I say that, I mean to be understood in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word) if my frame of mind shall be such as may permit me to study them. But Adam's approach to the tree of life, after he had sinned, was not more effectually prohibited by the flaming sword that turned every way, than mine to its great Antetype has been now almost these thirteen years, a short interval of three or four days, which passed about this time twelvemonth, alone excepted. For what reason it is that I am thus long excluded, if I am ever again to be admitted, is known to God only. I can say but this: that if he is still my Father, this paternal severity has, toward me, been such as that I have reason to account it unexampled. For though others have suffered desertion, yet few, I believe, for so long a time, and perhaps none a desertion accompanied with such experiences. But they have this belong-

ing to them: that as they are not fit for recital, being made up merely of infernal ingredients, so neither are they susceptible of it; for I know no language in which they could be expressed. They are as truly things which it is not possible for man to utter, as those were which Paul heard and saw in the third heaven. If the ladder of Christian experience reaches, as I suppose it does, to the very presence of God, it has nevertheless its foot in the abyss. And if Paul stood, as no doubt he did, in that experience of his to which I have just alluded, on the topmost round of it, I have been standing, and still stand on the lowest, in this thirteenth year that has passed since I descended. In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced an author. Distress drove me to it; and the impossibility of subsisting without some employment, still recommends it. I am not, indeed, so perfectly hope-

less as I was; but I am equally in need of an occupation, being often as much, and sometimes even more, worried than ever. I cannot amuse myself, as I once could, with carpenters' or with gardeners' tools, or with squirrels and guinea-pigs. At that time I was a child. But since it has pleased God, whatever else he withholds, to restore to me a man's mind, I have put away childish things. Thus far, therefore, it is plain that I have not chosen or prescribed to myself my own way, but have been providentially led to it; perhaps I might say, with equal propriety, compelled and scourged into it: for certainly, could I have made my choice, or were I permitted to make it even now, those hours which I spend in poetry I would spend with God. But it is evidently his will that I should spend them as I do, because every other way of employing them he himself continues to make impossible. If, in the course of such an occupation, or by inevitable consequence of it, either my former connexions are revived, or new ones

occur, these things are as much a part of the dispensation as the leading points of it themselves; the effect, as much as the cause. If his purposes in thus directing me are gracious, he will take care to prove them such in the issue; and, in the mean time, will preserve me (for he is able to do that in one condition of life as in another) from all mistakes in conduct that might prove pernicious to myself, or give reasonable offence to others. I can say it as truly as it was ever spoken,—Here I am: let him do with me as seemeth him good.

At present, however, I have no connexions, at which either you, I trust, or any who love me and wish me well, have occasion to conceive alarm. Much kindness indeed I have experienced at the hands of several, some of them near relations, others not related to me at all; but I do not know that there is among them a single person from whom I am likely to catch contamination. I can say of them

all, with more truth than Jacob uttered when he called kid venison, "The Lord thy God brought them unto me." I could shew you among them two men, whose lives, though they have but little of what we call evangelical light, are ornaments to a Christian country; men who fear God more than some who even profess to love him. But I will not particularize farther on such a subject. Be they what they may, our situations are so distant, and we are likely to meet so seldom, that were they, as they are not, persons even of exceptionable manners, their manners would have little to do with me. We correspond, at present, only on the subject of what passed at Troy three thousand years ago; and they are matters that, if they can do no good, will at least hurt nobody.

Your friendship for me, and the proof that I see of it in your friendly concern for my welfare on this occasion, demanded that I should

be explicit. Assure yourself that I love and honour you, as upon all accounts, so especially for the interest that you take, and have ever taken in my welfare, most sincerely. I wish you all happiness in your new abode, all possible success in your ministry, and much fruit of your newly-published labours; and am, with Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton,

Most affectionately yours,

My dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 1786.

I am not glad that I am obliged to apologise for an interval of three weeks that have elapsed since the receipt of yours; but not having it in my power to write oftener than I do, I am glad that my reason is such a one as you admit. In truth, my time is

very much occupied; and the more because I not only have a long and laborious work in hand, for such it would prove at any rate, but because I make it a point to bestow my utmost attention upon it, and to give it all the finishing that the most scrupulous accuracy can command. As soon as breakfast is over, I retire to my nutshell of a summer-house, which is my verse-manufactory, and here I abide seldom less than three hours, and not often more. In the afternoon I return to it again; and all the day-light that follows, except what is devoted to a walk, is given to Homer. It is well for me, that a course which is now become necessary is so much my choice. The regularity of it, indeed, has been in the course of this last week a little interrupted, by the arrival of my dear cousin Lady Hesketh; but with the new week I shall, as they say, turn over a new leaf, and put myself under the same rigorous discipline as before. Something, and

not a little, is due to the feelings that the sight of the kindest relation that ever man was blessed with must needs give birth to after so long a separation. But she, whose anxiety for my success is, I believe, even greater than my own, will take care that I shall not play truant and neglect my proper business. It was an observation of a sensible man, whom I knew well in ancient days, (I mean when I was very young,) that people are never in reality happy when they boast much of being so. I feel myself accordingly well content to say, without any enlargement on the subject, that an enquirer after happiness might travel far, and not find a happier trio, than meet every day, either in our parlour, or in the parlour at the Vicarage. I will not say that mine is not occasionally somewhat dashed with the sable hue of those notions, concerning myself and my situation, that have occupied, or rather possessed me so long: but on the other hand,

I can also affirm, that my Cousin's affectionate behaviour to us both, the sweetness of her temper, and the spriteliness of her conversation, relieve me in no small degree from the presence of them.

Mrs. Unwin is greatly pleased with your Sermons, and has told me so repeatedly; and the pleasure that they have given her awaits me also in due time, as I am well and confidently assured: both because the subject of them is the greatest and the most interesting that can fall under the pen of any writer, and because no writer can be better qualified to discuss it judiciously and feelingly than yourself. The third set with which you favoured us, we destined to Lady Hesketh; and in so disposing of them, are inclined to believe that we shall not err far from the mark at which you yourself directed them.

Our affectionate remembrances attend yourself and Mrs. Newton, to which you acquired

an everlasting right while you dwelt under the roof where we dined yesterday. It is impossible that we should set our foot over the threshold of the Vicarage, without recollecting all your kindness.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 5, 1786.

You have heard of our intended removal. The house that is to receive us is in a state of preparation, and, when finished, will be both smarter and more commodious than our present abode. But the circumstance that recommends it chiefly is its situation. Long confinement in the winter, and indeed for the most part in the autumn too, has hurt us both. A gravel walk,

thirty yards long, affords but indifferent scope to the locomotive faculty: yet it is all that we have had to move in for eight months in the year, during thirteen years that I have been a prisoner. Had I been confined in the Tower, the battlements of it would have furnished me with a larger space. You say well, that there was a time when I was happy at Olney; and I am now as happy at Olney as I expect to be any where without the presence of God. Change of situation is with me no otherwise an object than as both Mrs. Unwin's health and mine may happen to be concerned in it. A fever of the slow and spirit-oppressing kind seems to belong to all, except the natives, who have dwelt in Olney many years; and the natives have putrid fevers. Both they and we, I believe, are immediately indebted for our respective maladies to an atmosphere encumbered with raw vapours issuing from flooded meadows; and we in particular, perhaps, have fared the worse, for sitting so often, and some-

times for months, over a cellar filled with water. These ills we shall escape in the uplands; and as we may reasonably hope, of course, their consequences. But as for happiness, he that has once had communion with his Maker must be more frantic than ever I was yet, if he can dream of finding it at a distance from Him. I no more expect happiness at Weston than here, or than I should expect it, in company with felons and outlaws, in the hold of a ballast-lighter. Animal spirits, however, have their value, and are especially desirable to him who is condemned to carry a burthen, which at any rate will tire him, but which, without their aid, cannot fail to crush him. The dealings of God with me are to myself utterly unintelligible. I have never met, either in books or in conversation, with an experience at all similar to my own. More than a twelve month has passed since I began to hope that, having walked the whole breadth of the bottom of this Red Sea, I was beginning to climb

the opposite shore, and I prepared to sing the song of Moses. But I have been disappointed: those hopes have been blasted; those comforts have been wrested from me. I could not be so duped, even by the arch-enemy himself, as to be made to question the divine nature of them; but I have been made to believe (which, you will say, is being duped still more) that God gave them to me in derision, and took them away in vengeance. Such, however, is, and has been my persuasion many a long day; and when I shall think on that subject more comfortably, or, as you will be inclined to tell me, more rationally and scripturally, I know not. In the mean time, I embrace with alacrity every alleviation of my case, and with the more alacrity, because, whatsoever proves a relief of my distress, is a cordial to Mrs. Unwin, whose sympathy with me, through the whole of it, has been such, that, despair excepted, her burthen has been as heavy as mine. Lady Hesketh, by her affectionate behaviour, the

cheerfulness of her conversation, and the constant sweetness of her temper, has cheered us both; and Mrs. Unwin not less than me. By her help we get change of air and of scene, though still resident at Olney; and by her means, have intercourse with some families in this country, with whom, but for her, we could never have been acquainted. Her presence here would, at any time, even in my happiest days, have been a comfort to me; but, in the present day, I am doubly sensible of its value. She leaves nothing unsaid, nothing undone, that she thinks will be conducive to our well-being; and, so far as she is concerned, I have nothing to wish, but that I could believe her sent hither in mercy to myself,—then I should be thankful.

I am, my dear friend, with Mrs. Unwin's love to Mrs. N. and yourself, hers and yours, as ever.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 30, 1786.

No length of separation will ever make us indifferent either to your pleasures or your pains. We rejoice that you have had so agreeable a jaunt, and (excepting Mrs. Newton's terrible fall, from which, however, we are happy to find that she received so little injury,) a safe return. We, who live always encompassed by rural scenery, can afford to be stationary; though we ourselves, were I not too closely engaged with Homer, should perhaps follow your example, and seek a little refreshment from variety and change of place,—a course that we might find not only agreeable, but, after a sameness of thirteen years, perhaps useful. You must, undoubtedly, have found your excursion beneficial, who at all other times endure, if not so close a confinement as

we, yet a more unhealthy one, in city air and in the centre of continual engagements.

Your letter to Mrs. Unwin, concerning our conduct and the offence taken at it in our neighbourhood, gave us both a great deal of concern; and she is still deeply affected by it. Of this you may assure yourself, that if our friends in London have been grieved, they have been misinformed; which is the more probable, because the bearers of intelligence hence to London are not always very scrupulous concerning the truth of their reports; and that if any of our serious neighbours have been astonished, they have been so without the smallest real occasion. Poor people are never well employed even when they judge one another; but when they undertake to scan the motives and estimate the behaviour of those whom Providence has exalted a little above them, they are utterly out of their province and their depth. They often see us get into

Lady Hesketh's carriage, and rather uncharitably suppose that it always carries us into a scene of dissipation, which, in fact, it never does. We visit, indeed, at Mr. Throckmorton's, and at Gayhurst; rarely, however, at Gayhurst, on account of the greater distance: more frequently, though not very frequently, at Weston, both because it is nearer, and because our business in the house that is making ready for us often calls us that way. The rest of our journeys are to Beaujeat turnpike and back again; or, perhaps, to the cabinet-maker's at Newport. As Othello says,

> The very head and front of my offending
> Hath this extent, no more.

What good we can get or can do in these visits, is another question; which they, I am sure, are not at all qualified to solve. Of this we are both sure, that under the guidance of Providence we have formed these connexions; that we should have hurt the Christian cause,

rather than have served it, by a prudish abstinence from them; and that St. Paul himself, conducted to them as we have been, would have found it expedient to have done as we have done. It is always impossible to conjecture, to much purpose, from the beginnings of a providence, in what it will terminate. If we have neither received nor communicated any spiritual good at present, while conversant with our new acquaintance, at least no harm has befallen on either side; and it were too hazardous an assertion even for our censorious neighbours to make, that, because the cause of the Gospel does not appear to have been served at present, therefore it never can be in any future intercourse that we may have with them. In the mean time I speak a strict truth, and as in the sight of God, when I say that we are neither of us at all more addicted to gadding than heretofore. We both naturally love seclusion from company, and never go into it without putting a force upon our disposition;

at the same time I will confess, and you will easily conceive, that the melancholy incident to such close confinement as we have so long endured, finds itself a little relieved by such amusements as a society so innocent affords. You may look round the Christian world, and find few, I believe, of our station, who have so little intercourse as we with the world that is not Christian.

We place all the uneasiness that you have felt for us upon this subject, to the account of that cordial friendship of which you have long given us proof. But you may be assured, that notwithstanding all rumours to the contrary, we are exactly what we were when you saw us last:—I, miserable on account of God's departure from me, which I believe to be final; and she, seeking his return to me in the path of duty, and by continual prayer.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My usual time of answering your letters having been unavoidably engrossed by occasions that would not be thrust aside, I have been obliged to postpone the payment of my debt for a whole week. Even now it is not without some difficulty that I discharge it; which you will easily believe, when I tell you that this is only the second day that has seen us inhabitants of our new abode. When God speaks to a chaos, it becomes a scene of order and harmony in a moment; but when his creatures have thrown one house into confusion by leaving it, and another by tumbling themselves and their goods into it, not less than many days' labour and contrivance is necessary to give them their proper places. And it belongs to furniture of all kinds, how-

ever convenient it may be in its place, to be a nuisance out of it. We find ourselves here in a comfortable dwelling. Such it is in itself; and my cousin, who has spared no expense in dressing it up for us, has made it a genteel one. Such, at least, it will be when its contents are a little harmonized. She left us on Tuesday, and on Wednesday in the evening Mrs. Unwin and I took possession. I could not help giving a last look to my old prison and its precincts; and though I cannot easily account for it, having been miserable there so many years, felt something like a heart-ache when I took my last leave of a scene, that certainly in itself had nothing to engage affection. But I recollected that I had once been happy there, and could not, without tears in my eyes, bid adieu to a place in which God had so often found me. The human mind is a great mystery; mine, at least, appeared to me to be such upon this occasion. I found that I not only had a tenderness for that

ruinous abode, because it had once known me happy in the presence of God; but that even the distress I had suffered for so long a time, on account of his absence, had endeared it to me as much. I was weary of every object, had long wished for a change, yet could not take leave without a pang at parting. What consequences are to attend our removal, God only knows. I know well that it is not in situation to effect a cure of melancholy like mine. The change, however, has been entirely a providential one; for, much as I wished it, I never uttered that wish, except to Mrs. Unwin. When I learned that the house was to be let, and had seen it, I had a strong desire that Lady Hesketh should take it for herself, if she should happen to like the country. That desire, indeed, is not exactly fulfilled; and yet, upon the whole, is exceeded. We are the tenants; but she assures us that we shall often have her for a guest; and here is room enough for us all. You, I hope, my dear

friend, and Mrs. Newton, will want no assurances to convince you that you will always be received here with the sincerest welcome. More welcome than you have been, you cannot be; but better accommodated you may and will be.

Adieu, my dear friend. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances and mine conclude me ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 16, 1786.

The death of one whom I valued as I did Mr. Unwin, is a subject on which I could say much, and with much feeling. But habituated as my mind has been these many

years to melancholy themes, I am glad to excuse myself the contemplation of them as much as possible. I will only observe, that the death of so young a man, whom I so lately saw in good health, and whose life was so desirable on every account, has something in it peculiarly distressing. I cannot think of the widow and the children that he has left, without an heart-ache that I remember not to have felt before. We may well say, that the ways of God are mysterious: in truth they are so, and to a degree that only such events can give us any conception of. Mrs. Unwin begs me to give her love to you, with thanks for your kind letter. Her's has been so much a life of affliction, that whatever occurs to her in that shape has not, at least, the terrors of novelty to embitter it. She is supported under this, as she has been under a thousand others, with a submission of which I never saw her deprived for a moment.

Once, since we left Olney, I had occasion to call at our old dwelling; and never did I see so forlorn and woeful a spectacle. Deserted of its inhabitants, it seemed as if it could never be dwelt in for ever. The coldness of it, the dreariness, and the dirt, made me think it no unapt resemblance of a soul that God has forsaken. While he dwelt in it, and manifested himself there, he could create his own accommodations, and give it occasionally the appearance of a palace; but the moment he withdraws, and takes with him all the furniture and embellishment of his graces, it becomes what it was before he entered it—the habitation of vermin, and the image of desolation. Sometimes I envy the living, but not much, or not long; for while they live, as we call it, they too are liable to desertion. But the dead who have died in the Lord, I envy always; for they, I take it for granted, can be no more forsaken.

This Babylon, however, that we have left behind us, ruinous as it is, the ceilings cracked and the walls crumbling, still finds some who covet it. A shoemaker and an alemonger, have proposed themselves as joint candidates to succeed us. Some small difference between them and the landlord, on the subject of rent, has hitherto kept them out; but at last they will probably agree. In the mean time Mr. R—— prophesies its fall, and tells them that they will occupy it at the hazard of their lives, unless it be well propped before they enter it. We have not, therefore, left it much too soon; and this we knew before we migrated, though the same prophet would never speak out, so long as only our heads were in danger.

I wish you well through your laborious task of transcribing. I hope the good lady's meditations are such as amuse you rather more, while you copy them, than meditations in general would; which, for the most part, have

appeared to me the most laboured, insipid, and unnatural of all productions.

Adieu my dear friend. Our love attends you both.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1787.

It gave me pleasure, such as it was, to learn by a letter from Mr. H. Thornton, that the Inscription for the tomb of poor Unwin has been approved of. The dead have nothing to do with human praises; but if they died in the Lord, they have abundant praises to render to Him; which is far better. The dead, whatever they leave behind them, have nothing to regret. Good Christians are

the only creatures in the world that are truly good; and them they will see again, and see them improved: therefore them they regret not. Regret is for the living. What we get, we soon lose; and what we lose, we regret. The most obvious consolation in this case seems to be, that we who regret others, shall quickly become objects of regret ourselves; for mankind are continually passing off in a rapid succession.

I have many kind friends, who, like yourself, wish that, instead of turning my endeavours to a translation of Homer, I had proceeded in the way of original poetry. But I can truly say that it was ordered otherwise, not by me, but by the Providence that governs all my thoughts, and directs my intentions as he pleases. It may seem strange, but it is true, that after having written a volume, in general with great ease to myself, I found it impossible to write another page.

The mind of man is not a fountain, but a cistern; and mine, God knows, a broken one. It is my creed, that the intellect depends as much, both for the energy and the multitude of its exertions, upon the operations of *God's* agency upon it, as the heart, for the exercise of its graces, upon the influence of the Holy Spirit. According to this persuasion, I may very reasonably affirm, that it was not God's pleasure that I should proceed in the same track, because he did not enable me to do it. A whole year I waited, and waited in circumstances of mind that made a state of non-employment peculiarly irksome to me. I longed for the pen, as the only remedy, but I could find no subject: extreme distress of spirit at last drove me, as, if I mistake not, I told you some time since, to lay Homer before me, and translate for amusement. Why it pleased God that I should be hunted into such a business, of such enormous length and labour, by miseries for which

He did not see good to afford me any other remedy, I know not. But so it was; and jejune as the consolation may be, and unsuited to the exigencies of a mind that once was spiritual, yet a thousand times have I been glad of it; for a thousand times it has served at least to divert my attention, in some degree, from such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind. Let my friends, therefore, who wish me some little measure of tranquillity in the performance of the most turbulent voyage that ever Christian mariner made, be contented, that, having Homer's mountains and forests to windward, I escape, under their shelter, from the force of many a gust that would almost overset me; especially when they consider that, not by choice, but by necessity, I make *them* my refuge. As to fame, and honour, and glory, that may be acquired by poetical feats of any sort, God knows, that if I could lay me down in my grave with hope at my side, or sit

with hope at my side in a dungeon all the residue of my days, I would cheerfully wave them all. For the little fame that I have already earned has never saved me from one distressing night, or from one despairing day, since I first acquired it. *For* what I am reserved, or *to* what, is a mystery; I would fain hope, not merely that I may amuse others, or only to be a translator of Homer.

Sally Perry's case has given us much concern. I have no doubt that it is distemper. But distresses of mind, that are occasioned by distemper, are the most difficult of all to deal with. They refuse all consolation; they will hear no reason. God only, by his own immediate impressions, can remove them; as, after an experience of thirteen years' misery, I can abundantly testify.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Weston Underwood, Oct. 2, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

After a long but necessary interruption of our correspondence, I return to it again, in one respect, at least, better qualified for it than before; I mean by a belief of your identity, which for thirteen years I did not believe. The acquisition of this light, if light it may be called which leaves me as much in the dark as ever on the most interesting subjects, releases me however from the disagreeable suspicion that I am addressing myself to you as the friend whom I loved and valued so highly in my better days, while in fact you are not that friend, but a stranger. I can now write to you without seeming to act a part, and without having any need to charge myself with dissimulation;—a charge from which, in that state of mind and under such an uncomfort-

able persuasion, I knew not how to exculpate myself, and which, as you will easily conceive, not seldom made my correspondence with you a burthen. Still, indeed, it wants, and is likely to want, that best ingredient which can alone make it truly pleasant either to myself or you—that spirituality which once enlivened all our intercourse. You will tell me, no doubt, that the knowledge I have gained is an earnest of more and more valuable information, and that the dispersion of the clouds in part, promises, in due time, their complete dispersion. I should be happy to believe it; but the power to do so is at present far from me. Never was the mind of man benighted to the degree that mine has been. The storms that have assailed me would have overset the faith of every man that ever had any; and the very remembrance of them, even after they have been long passed by, makes hope impossible.

Mrs. Unwin, whose poor bark is still held together, though shattered by being tossed and

agitated so long at the side of mine, does not forget yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness on this last occasion. Mrs. Newton's offer to come to her assistance, and your readiness to have rendered us the same service, could you have hoped for any salutary effect of your presence, neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself undervalue, nor shall presently forget. But you judged right when you supposed, that even your company would have been no relief to me; the company of my father or my brother, could they have returned from the dead to visit me, would have been none to me.

We are busied in preparing for the reception of Lady Hesketh, whom we expect here shortly. We have beds to put up, and furniture for beds to make; workmen, and scouring, and bustle. Mrs. Unwin's time has, of course, been lately occupied to a degree that made writing to her impracticable; and she excused herself the rather, knowing my

intentions to take her office. It does not, however, suit me to write much at a time. This last tempest has left my nerves in a worse condition than it found them; my head, especially, though better informed, is more infirm than ever. I will, therefore, only add our joint love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, and that I am, my dear friend,

Your affectionate

W. C.*

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 20, 1787.

My indisposition could not be of a worse kind. Had I been afflicted with a fever,

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* This letter was addressed to Mr. Newton, on the writer's recovery from an attack of his grievous constitutional malady, which lasted eight months.

or confined by a broken bone, neither of these cases would have made it impossible that we should meet. I am truly sorry that the impediment was insurmountable while it lasted, for such in fact it was. The sight of any face, except Mrs. Unwin's, was to me an insupportable grievance; and when it has happened that by *forcing* himself into my hiding place, some friend has found me out, he has had no great cause to exult in his success, as Mr. Bull can tell you. From this dreadful condition of mind, I emerged suddenly; so suddenly, that Mrs. Unwin, having no notice of such a change herself, could give none to any body; and when it obtained, how long it might last, or how far it was to be depended on, was a matter of the greatest uncertainty. It affects me on the recollection with the more concern, because I learn from your last, that I have not only lost an interview with you myself, but have stood in the way of visits that you would have gladly paid to others, and who

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would have been happy to have seen you. You should have forgotten (but you are not good at forgetting your friends) that such a creature as myself existed.

I rejoice that Mrs. Cowper has been so comfortably supported. She must have severely felt the loss of her son. She has an affectionate heart toward her children, and could not but be sensible of the bitterness of such a cup. But God's presence sweetens every bitter. Desertion is the only evil that a Christian cannot bear.

I have done a deed for which I find some people thank me little. Perhaps I have only burned my fingers, and had better not have meddled. Last Sunday se'nnight I drew up a petition to Lord Dartmouth, in behalf of Mr. Postlethwaite. We signed it, and all the principal inhabitants of Weston followed our example. What we had done was soon known

in Olney, and an evening or two ago, Mr. R—— called here, to inform me (for that seemed to be his errand,) how little the measure that I had taken was relished by some of his neighbours. I vindicated my proceeding on the principles of justice and mercy to a laborious and well-deserving minister, to whom I had the satisfaction to find that none could allege one serious objection, and that all, except one, who objected at all, are persons who in reality ought to have no vote upon such a question. The affair seems still to remain undecided. If his Lordship waits, which I a little suspect, till his steward shall have taken the sense of those with whom he is likely to converse upon the subject, and means to be determined by his report, Mr. Postlethwaite's case is desperate.

I beg that you will remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon. We rejoice in Mrs. Newton's amended health, and when we can hear that she is restored, shall rejoice still more.

The next summer may prove more propitious to us than the past: if it should, we shall be happy to receive you and yours. Mrs. Unwin unites with me in love to you all three. She is tolerably well, and her writing was prevented by nothing but her expectation that I should soon do it myself.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 21, 1788.

Your last letter informed us that you were likely to be much occupied for some time in writing on a subject that must be interesting to a person of your feelings—the Slave Trade. I was unwilling to interrupt your progress in so good a work, and have therefore enjoined myself a longer silence than

I should otherwise have thought excusable; though, to say the truth, did not our once intimate fellowship in the things of God, recur to my remembrance, and present me with something like a warrant for doing it, I should hardly prevail with myself to write at all. Letters, such as mine, to a person of a character such as yours, are like snow in harvest; and you well say, that if I will send you a letter that you can answer, I shall make your part of the business easier than it is. This I would gladly do; but though I abhor a vacuum as much as Nature herself is said to do, yet a vacuum I am bound to feel of all such matter as may merit your perusal.

I expected that before this time I should have had the pleasure of seeing your friend Mr. Bean,* but his stay in this country was

* Formerly Vicar of Olney, and now one of the Librarians of the British Museum.

so short, that it was hardly possible he should find an opportunity to call. I have not only heard a high character of that gentleman from yourself, whose opinion of men, as well as of other matters, weighs more with me than any body's; but from two or three different persons likewise, not ill qualified to judge. From all that I have heard, both from you and them, I have every reason to expect that I shall find him both an agreeable and useful neighbour; and if he can be content with me, (for that seems doubtful, poet as I am, and now, alas! nothing more,) it seems certain that I shall be highly satisfied with him.

Here is much shifting and changing of ministers. Two are passing away, and two are stepping into the places. Mr. B——, I suppose, whom I know not, is almost upon the wing; and Mr. P——, with whom I have not been very much acquainted, is either

going or gone. A Mr. C—— is come to occupy, for the present at least, the place of the former; and if he can possess himself of the two curacies of Ravenstone and Weston, will, I imagine, take up his abode here. Having, as I understand, no engagements elsewhere, he will doubtless be happy to obtain a lasting one in this country. What acceptance he finds among the people of Ravenstone I have not heard, but at Olney, where he has preached once, he was hailed as the Sun by the Greenlanders after half a year of lamp-light.

Providence interposed to preserve me from the heaviest affliction that I can now suffer, or I had lately lost Mrs. Unwin, and in a way the most shocking imaginable. Having kindled her fire in the room where she dresses, (an office that she always performs for herself,) she placed the candle on the hearth, and kneeling addressed herself to her devotions.

A thought struck her, while thus occupied, that the candle being short might possibly catch her clothes. She pinched it out with the tongs, and set it on the table. In a few minutes the chamber was so filled with smoke, that her eyes watered, and it was hardly possible to see across it. Supposing that it proceeded from the chimney, she pushed the billets backward, and while she did so, casting her eye downward, perceived that her dress was on fire. In fact, before she extinguished the candle, the mischief that she apprehended was begun; and when she related the matter to me, she showed me her clothes with a hole burnt in them as large as this sheet of paper. It is not possible, perhaps, that so tragical a death should overtake a person actually engaged in prayer, for her escape seems almost a miracle. Her presence of mind, by which she was enabled, without calling for help or waiting for it, to gather up her clothes and plunge them, burning as they were, in

water, seems as wonderful a part of the occurrence as any. The very report of fire, though distant, has rendered hundreds torpid and incapable of self-succour; how much more was such a disability to be expected, when the fire had not seized a neighbour's house, or begun its devastations on our own, but was actually consuming the apparel that she wore, and seemed in possession of her person.

It draws toward supper-time. I therefore heartily wish you a good night; and with our best affections to yourself, Mrs. Newton, and Miss Catlett, I remain, my dear friend, truly and warmly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING,

PERTON HALL, NEAR KIMBOLTON, HUNTS.

DEAR MADAM, Weston Lodge, Feb. 12, 1788.

A letter from a lady who was once intimate with my brother, could not fail of being most acceptable to me. I lost him just in the moment when those truths which have recommended my volumes to your approbation, were become his daily sustenance, as they had long been mine. But the will of God was done. I have sometimes thought that had his life been spared, being made brothers by a stricter tie than ever in the bonds of the same faith, hope, and love, we should have been happier in each other than it was in the power of mere natural affection to make us. But it was his blessing to be taken from a world in which he had no longer any wish to continue, and it will be mine, if while I dwell in it, my time may

not be altogether wasted. In order to effect that good end, I wrote what I am happy to find it has given you pleasure to read. But for that pleasure, Madam, you are indebted neither to me, nor to my Muse; but (as you are well aware) to Him who alone can make divine truths palatable, in whatever vehicle conveyed. It is an established philosophical axiom, that nothing can communicate what it has not in itself; but in the effects of Christian communion, a very strong exception is found to this general rule, however self-evident it may seem. A man himself destitute of all spiritual consolation, may, by occasion, impart it to others. Thus I, it seems, who wrote those very poems to amuse a mind oppressed with melancholy, and who have myself derived from them no other benefit, (for mere success in authorship will do me no good,) have nevertheless, by so doing, comforted others, at the same time that they administer to me no consolation. But I will

proceed no farther in this strain, lest my prose should damp a pleasure that my verse has happily excited. On the contrary, I will endeavour to rejoice in your joy, and especially because I have been myself the instrument of conveying it.

Since the receipt of your obliging letter, I have naturally had recourse to my recollection to try if it would furnish me with the name that I find at the bottom of it. At the same time, I am aware that there is nothing more probable than that my brother might be honoured with your friendship without mentioning it to me; for except a very short period before his death, we lived necessarily at a considerable distance from each other. Ascribe it, Madam, not to an impertinent curiosity, but to a desire of better acquaintance with you, if I take the liberty to ask (since ladies' names, at least, are changeable,) whether yours was at that time the same as now.

Sincerely wishing you all happiness, and especially that which I am sure you covet most, the happiness which is from above, I remain, dear Madam—early as it may seem to say it,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 1, 1788.

That my letters may not be exactly an echo to those which I receive, I seldom read a letter immediately before I answer it; trusting to my memory to suggest to me such of its contents as may call for particular notice. Thus I dealt with your last, which lay in my desk, while I was writing to you. But my memory, or rather my recollection, failed me, in that instance. I had not forgotten Mr. Bean's letter, nor my obligations to

you for the communication of it: but they did not happen to present themselves to me, in the proper moment, nor till some hours after my own had been dispatched. I now return it, with many thanks for so favourable a specimen of its author. That he is a good man, and a wise man, its testimony proves sufficiently; and I doubt not, that when he shall speak for himself, he will be found an agreeable one. For it is possible to be very good, and, in many respects, very wise; yet, at the same time, not the most delightful companion. Excuse the shortness of an occasional scratch, which I send in much haste; and believe me, my dear friend, with our united love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, of whose health we hope to hear a more favourable account, as the year rises,

Your truly affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 3, 1788.*

I had not, as you may imagine, read more than two or three lines of the enclosed, before I perceived that I had accidentally come to the possession of another man's property; who, by the same misadventure, has doubtless occupied mine. I accordingly folded it again the moment after having opened it, and now return it. The bells of Olney both last night and this morning have announced the arrival of Mr. Bean. I understand that he is now come with his family. It will not be long, therefore, before we shall be acquainted. I rather wish than hope that he may find

* The date having been probably written on the latter half of this letter, which is torn off, the editor has endeavoured to supply it from the following to Mrs. King, and the next to Mrs. Newton.

himself comfortably situated; but the parishioners' admiration of Mr. C—, whatever the bells may say, is no good omen. It is hardly to be expected that the same people should admire both.

I have lately been engaged in a correspondence with a lady whom I never saw. She lives at Perten-hall, near Kimbolton, and is the wife of a Dr. King, who has the living. She is evidently a Christian, and a very gracious one. I would that she had you for a correspondent rather than me. One letter from you would do her more good than a ream of mine. But so it is; and since I cannot depute my office to you, and am bound by all sorts of considerations to answer her this evening, I must necessarily quit you that I may have time to do it.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

March 3, 1788.

I owe you many acknowledgments, dear Madam, for that unreserved communication both of your history and of your sentiments, with which you favoured me in your last. It gives me great pleasure to learn that you are so happily circumstanced, both in respect of situation and frame of mind. With your view of religious subjects, you could not indeed, speaking properly, be pronounced unhappy in any circumstances; but to have received from above not only that faith which reconciles the heart to affliction, but many outward comforts also, and especially that greatest of all earthly comforts, a comfortable home, is happiness indeed. May you long enjoy it! As to health or sickness, you have learned already their true value, and know well that the former is no blessing, unless it

be sanctified, and that the latter is one of the greatest we can receive, when we are enabled to make a proper use of it.

There is nothing in my story that can possibly be worth your knowledge; yet, lest I should seem to treat you with a reserve which, at your hands, I have not experienced, such as it is, I will relate it.—I was bred to the law; a profession to which I was never much inclined, and in which I engaged rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father, than because I had any hope of success in it, myself. I spent twelve years in the Temple, where I made no progress in that science, to cultivate which I was sent thither. During this time my father died. Not long after him, died my mother-in-law, and at the expiration of it, a melancholy seized me, which obliged me to quit London, and consequently to renounce the bar. I lived some time at St. Albans. After having suffered in that place long and

extreme affliction, the storm was suddenly dispelled, and the same day-spring from on high which has arisen upon you, arose on me also. I spent eight years in the enjoyment of it, and have ever since the expiration of those eight years, been occasionally the prey of the same melancholy as at first. In the depths of it I wrote the Task, and the volume which preceded it; and in the same deeps I am now translating Homer. But to return to St. Albans. I abode there a year and half. Thence I went to Cambridge, where I spent a short time with my brother, in whose neighbourhood I determined, if possible, to pass the remainder of my days. He soon found a lodging for me at Huntingdon. At that place I had not resided long, when I was led to an intimate connexion with a family of the name of Unwin. I soon quitted my lodging, and took up my abode with them. I had not lived long under their roof, when Mr. Unwin, as he was riding one Sunday morning to his cure at Gravely,

was thrown from his horse; of which fall he died. Mrs. Unwin having the same views of the gospel as myself, and being desirous of attending a purer ministration of it than was to be found at Huntingdon, removed to Olney, where Mr. Newton was at that time the preacher, and I with her. There we continued till Mr. Newton, whose family was the only one in the place with which we could have a connexion, and with whom we lived always on the most intimate terms, left it. After his departure, finding the situation no longer desirable, and our house threatening to fall upon our heads, we removed hither. Here we have a good house in a most beautiful village, and, for the greatest part of the year, a most agreeable neighbourhood. Like you, Madam, I stay much at home, and have not travelled twenty miles from this place and its environs, more than once these twenty years.

All this I have written, not for the singularity of the matter, as you will perceive, but

partly for the reason which I gave at the outset, and partly that, seeing we are become correspondents, we may know as much of each other as we can, and that as soon as possible.

I beg, Madam, that you will present my best respects to Mr. King, whom, together with yourself, should you at any time hereafter take wing for a longer flight than usual, we shall be happy to receive at Weston, and believe me, dear Madam, his and your obliged and affectionate,

W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

MY DEAR MADAM, March 17, 1788.

A thousand thanks to you for your obliging and most acceptable present, which I received safe this evening. Had you known

my occasions, you could not possibly have timed it more exactly. The Throckmorton family, who live in our neighbourhood, and who sometimes take a dinner with us, were, by engagement made with them two or three days ago, appointed to dine with us just at the time when your turkey will be in perfection. A turkey from Wargrave, the residence of my friend, and a turkey, as I conclude, of your breeding, stands a fair chance, in my account, to excel all other turkeys; and the ham, its companion, will be no less welcome.

I shall be happy to hear that my friend Joseph has recovered entirely from his late indisposition, which I was informed was gout; a distemper which, however painful in itself, brings at least some comfort with it, both for the patient and those who love him, the hope of length of days, and an exemption from numerous other evils. I wish him just so much

of it as may serve for a confirmation of this hope, and not one twinge more.

Your husband, my dear Madam, told me, some time since, that a certain library of mine, concerning which I have heard no other tidings these five and twenty years, is still in being. Hue and cry have been made after it in Old Palace Yard, but hitherto in vain. If he can inform a bookless student in what region or in what nook his long-lost volumes may be found, he will render me an important service.

I am likely to be furnished soon with shelves, which my cousin of New Norfolk-street is about to send me; but furniture for these shelves I shall not presently procure, unless by recovering my stray authors. I am not young enough to think of making a new collection, and shall probably possess myself of few books hereafter but such as I may put forth myself, which cost

me nothing but what I can better spare than money—time and consideration.

I beg, my dear Madam, that you will give my love to my friend, and believe me, with the warmest sense of his and your kindness,

Your most obliged
and affectionate
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 17, 1788.

The evening is almost worn away, while I have been writing a letter, to which I was obliged to give immediate attention. An application from a lady, and backed by you, could not be less than irresistible. That lady, too, a daughter of Mr. Thornton's. Neither are these words of course: since I returned to Homer in good earnest, I turn out of my way

for no consideration that I can possibly put aside.

With modern tunes I am unacquainted, and have therefore accommodated my verse to an old one; not so old, however, but that there will be songsters found old enough to remember it. The song is an admirable one for which it was made, and, though political, nearly, if not quite, as serious as mine. On such a subject as I had before me, it seems impossible not to be serious. I shall be happy if it meet with your and Lady Balgonie's approbation.

Of Mr. Bean I could say much; but have only time at present, to say that I esteem and love him. On some future occasion I shall speak of him more at large.

'We rejoice that Mrs. Newton is better, and wish nothing more than her complete recovery. Dr. Ford is to be pitied. His wife, I suppose,

is going to heaven; a journey which she can better afford to take, than he to part with her.

I am, my dear friend, with our united love to you all three, most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

DEAR MADAM, April 11, 1788.

The melancholy that I have mentioned, and concerning which you are so kind as to enquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. It does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatsoever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed either in reading or writing when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence; be-

cause, when I am not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament. I thank you for your recommendation of a medicine from which you have received benefit yourself; but there is hardly any thing that I have not proved, however beneficial it may have been found by others, in my own case utterly useless. I have, therefore, long since bid adieu to all hope from human means,—the means excepted of perpetual employment.

I will not say that we shall never meet, because it is not for a creature, who knows not what shall be to-morrow, to assert any thing positively concerning the future. Things more unlikely I have yet seen brought to pass, and things which, if I had expressed myself of them at all, I should have said were impossible. But being respectively circumstanced as we are, there seems no present probability of it. You speak of insuperable hindrances;

and I also have hindrances that would be equally difficult to surmount. One is, that I never ride, that I am not able to perform a journey on foot, and that chaises do not roll within the sphere of that economy which my circumstances oblige me to observe. If this were not of itself sufficient to excuse me, when I decline so obliging an invitation as yours, I could mention yet other obstacles. But to what end? One impracticability makes as effectual a barrier as a thousand. It will be otherwise in other worlds. Either we shall not bear about us a body, or it will be more easily transportable than this. In the mean time, by the help of the post, strangers to each other may cease to be such, as you and I have already begun to experience.

It is indeed, Madam, as you say, a foolish world, and likely to continue such till the Great Teacher shall himself vouchsafe to make it wiser. I am persuaded that time alone will

never mend it. But there is doubtless a day appointed when there shall be a more general manifestation of the beauty of holiness than mankind have ever yet beheld. When that period shall arrive, there will be an end of profane representations, whether of Heaven or Hell, on the stage:—the great realities will supersede them.

I have just discovered that I have written to you on paper so transparent, that it will hardly keep the contents a secret. Excuse the mistake, and believe me, dear Madam, with my respects to Mr. King,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 19, 1788.

I thank you for your last, and for the verses in particular, therein contained; in which there is not only rhime but reason. And yet I fear that neither you nor I, with all our reasoning and rhiming, shall effect much good in this matter. So far as I can learn, and I have had intelligence from a quarter within the reach of such as is respectable, our Governors are not animated altogether with such heroic ardour as the occasion might inspire. They consult frequently, indeed, in the Cabinet about it; but the frequency of their consultations in a case so plain as this would be, (did not what Shakspeare calls commodity, and what we call political expediency, cast a cloud over it,) rather bespeaks a desire to save appearances, than to interpose to purpose.

Laws will, I suppose, be enacted for the more humane treatment of the negroes; but who shall see to the execution of them? The planters will not, and the negroes cannot. In fact we know, that laws of this tendency have not been wanting, enacted even amongst themselves; but there has been always a want of prosecutors, or righteous judges; deficiencies, which will not be very easily supplied. The newspapers have lately told us, that these merciful masters have, on this occasion, been occupied in passing ordinances, by which the lives and limbs of their slaves are to be secured from wanton cruelty hereafter. But who does not immediately detect the artifice, or can give them a moment's credit for any thing more than a design, by this show of lenity, to avert the storm which they think hangs over them. On the whole, I fear there is reason to wish, for the honour of England, that the nuisance had never been troubled; lest we eventually make ourselves

justly chargeable with the whole offence by not removing it. The enormity cannot be palliated; we can no longer plead that we were not aware of it, or that our attention was otherwise engaged; and shall be inexcusable, therefore, ourselves, if we leave the least part of it unredressed. Such arguments as Pharaoh might have used, to justify his destruction of the Israelites, substituting only sugar for bricks, may lie ready for our use also; but I think we can find no better.

We are tolerably well, and shall rejoice to hear that, as the year rises, Mrs. Newton's health keeps pace with it. Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately and truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 25, 1788.

Ask possibilities and they shall be performed, but ask not hymns from a man suffering by despair as I do. I could not sing the Lord's song were it to save my life, banished as I am, not to a strange land, but to a remoteness from his presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is no distance, is vicinity and cohesion. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me; least of all can I venture to use the language of absolute resignation, lest, only counterfeiting, I should for that very reason be taken strictly at my word, and lose all my remaining comfort. Can there not be found among those translations of Madame Guyon, somewhat that might serve the purpose? I should think there might. Submission to the

will of Christ, my memory tells me, is a theme that pervades them all. If so, your request is performed already; and if any alteration in them should be necessary, I will with all my heart make it. I have no objection to giving the graces of the foreigner an English dress, but insuperable ones to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel.

Hoping that you will have the grace to be resigned most perfectly to this disappointment, which you should not have suffered, had it been in my power to prevent it, I remain, with our best remembrances to Mr. Thornton,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 5, 1788.

It is a comfort to me that you are so kind as to make allowance for me, in consideration of my being so busy a man. The truth is, that could I write with both hands, and with both at the same time, verse with one and prose with the other, I should not even so be able to dispatch both my poetry and my arrears of correspondence faster than I have need. The only opportunities that I can find for conversing with distant friends, are in the early hour (and that sometimes reduced to half a one) before breakfast. Neither am I exempt from hindrances, which, while they last, are insurmountable; especially one, by which I have been occasionally a sufferer all my life. I mean an inflammation of the eyes; a malady under which I have lately laboured, and from which I am at this moment only in a small

degree relieved. The last sudden change of the weather, from heat almost insupportable to a cold as severe as is commonly felt in mid-winter, would have disabled me entirely for all sorts of scribbling, had I not favoured the weak part a little, and given my eyes a respite.

It is certain that we do not live far from Olney, but, small as the distance is, it has too often the effect of a separation between the Beans and us. He is a man with whom, when I can converse at all, I can converse on terms perfectly agreeable to myself; who does not distress me with forms, nor yet disgust me by the neglect of them; whose manners are easy and natural, and his observations always sensible. I often, therefore, wish them nearer neighbours.

We have heard nothing of the Powleys since they left us, a fortnight ago; and should be uneasy at their silence on such an occasion,

did we not know that she cannot write, and that he, on his first return to his parish after a long absence, may possibly find it difficult. Her we found much improved in her health and spirits, and him, as always, affectionate and obliging. It was an agreeable visit, and as it was ordered for me, I happened to have better spirits than I have enjoyed at any time since.

I shall rejoice if your friend Mr. Philips, influenced by what you told him of my present engagements, shall waive his application to me for a poem on the slave-trade. I account myself honoured by his intention to solicit me on the subject, and it would give me pain to refuse him, which inevitably I shall be constrained to do. The more I have considered it, the more I have convinced myself that it is not a promising theme for verse. General censure on the iniquity of the practice will avail nothing. The world has been over-

whelmed with such remarks already, and to particularize all the horrors of it were an employment for the mind both of the poet and his readers, of which they would necessarily soon grow weary. For my own part, I cannot contemplate the subject very nearly, without a degree of abhorrence that affects my spirits, and sinks them below the pitch requisite for success in verse. Lady Hesketh recommended it to me some months since, and then I declined it for these reasons, and for others which need not be mentioned here.

I return you many thanks for all your intelligence concerning the success of the gospel in far countries, and shall rejoice in a sight of Mr. Van Lier's letter, which, being so voluminous, I think you should bring with you, when you can take your flight to Weston, rather than commit to any other conveyance.

Remember that it is now summer, and that the summer flies fast, and that we shall be happy

to see you and yours, as speedily and for as long a time as you can afford. We are sorry, truly so, that Mrs. Newton is so frequently and so much indisposed. Accept our best love to you both, and believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

After what I have said on the subject of my writing engagements, I doubt not but you will excuse my transcribing the verses to Mrs. Montague, especially considering that my eyes are weary with what I have written this morning already. I feel somewhat like an impropriety in referring you to the next Gentleman's Magazine; but at the present juncture I know not how to do better.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, June 19, 1788.

You must think me a tardy correspondent, unless you have had charity enough for me to suppose that I have met with other hindrances than those of indolence and inattention. With these I cannot charge myself, for I am never idle by choice; and inattentive to you I certainly have not been; but, on the contrary, can safely affirm that every day I have thought on you. My silence has been occasioned by a malady to which I have all my life been subject—an inflammation of the eyes. The last sudden change of weather, from excessive heat to a wintry degree of cold, occasioned it, and at the same time gave me a pinch of the rheumatic kind; from both which disorders I have but just recovered. I do not suppose that our climate has been much altered since the days of our forefathers, the Picts; but certainly the

human constitution in this country has been altered much. Inured as we are from our cradles to every vicissitude in a climate more various than any other, and in possession of all that modern refinement has been able to contrive for our security, we are yet as subject to blights as the tenderest blossoms of spring; and are so well admonished of every change in the atmosphere by our bodily feelings, as hardly to have any need of a weather-glass to mark them. For this we are, no doubt, indebted to the multitude of our accommodations; for it was not possible to retain the hardiness that originally belonged to our race, under the delicate management to which for many ages we have now been accustomed. I can hardly doubt that a bull-dog or a game-cock might be made just as susceptible of injuries from weather as myself, were he dieted, and in all respects accommodated as I am. Or if the project did not succeed in the first instance (for we ourselves did not become

what we are at once), in process of time, however, and in a course of many generations it would certainly take effect. Let such a dog be fed in his infancy with pap, Naples' biscuit, and boiled chicken; let him be wrapt in flannel at night, sleep on a good feather-bed, and ride out in a coach for an airing; and if his posterity do not become slight-limbed, puny, and valetudinarian, it will be a wonder. Thus our parents, and their parents, and the parents of both were managed; and thus ourselves; and the consequence is, that instead of being weather-proof, even without clothing, furs and flannels are not warm enough to defend us. It is observable, however, that though we have by these means lost much of our pristine vigour, our days are not the fewer. We live as long as those whom, on account of the sturdiness of their frame, the poets supposed to have been the progeny of oaks. Perhaps too they had little feeling, and for that reason also might be imagined to be so descended. For a

very robust athletic habit seems inconsistent with much sensibility. But sensibility is the *sine quâ non* of real happiness. If, therefore, our lives have not been shortened, and if our feelings have been rendered more exquisite as our habit of body has become more delicate, on the whole, perhaps, we have no cause to complain, but are rather gainers by our degeneracy.

Do you consider what you do, when you ask one poet his opinion of another? Yet I think I can give you an honest answer to your question, and without the least wish to nibble. Thomson was admirable in description; but it always seemed to me that there was somewhat of affectation in his style, and that his numbers are sometimes not well harmonized. I could wish too, with Dr. Johnson, that he had confined himself to this country, for when he describes what he never saw, one is forced to read him with some al-

lowance for possible misrepresentation. He was, however, a true poet, and his lasting fame has proved it. Believe me, my dear Madam, with my best respects to Mr. King, most truly yours,

W. C.

P. S. I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and hope that your next will bring me a more favourable account of your health. I know not why, but I rather suspect that you do not allow yourself sufficient air and exercise. The physicians call them non-naturals, I suppose to deter their patients from the use of them.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 24, 1788.

I rejoice that my letter found you at all points so well prepared to answer it according to our wishes. I have written to Lady Hesketh, to apprise her of your intended journey hither, and she, having as yet made no assignation with us herself, will easily adjust her measures to the occasion.

I have not lately had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Bean. The late rains, which have revived the hopes of the farmers, have intercepted our communication. I hear, however, that he meets with not a little trouble, in his progress towards a reformation of Olney manners; and that the Sabbath, which he wishes to have hallowed by a stricter and more general observation of it, is, through

the brutality of the lowest order, a day of more turbulence and riot than any other. At the latter end of last week he found himself obliged to make another trip to the justice, in company with two or three of the principal inhabitants. What passed, I have not learned; but I understand their errand to have been, partly at least, to efface the evil impressions made on his worship's mind, by a man who had applied to him a day or two before for a warrant against the constable; which, however, he did not obtain. I rather fear that the constables are not altogether judicious in the exercise either of their justice, or their mercy. Some who have seemed proper objects of punishment, they have released, on a hopeless promise of better behaviour; and others, whose offence has been personal against themselves, though in other respects less guilty, they have set in the stocks. The ladies, however, and of course the ladies of Silver-End in particular,

give them the most trouble, being always active on these occasions, as well as clamorous, and both with impunity. For the sex are privileged in the free use of their tongues, and of their nails, the Parliament having never yet laid them under any penal restrictions; and they employ them accordingly. Johnson, the constable, lost much of his skin, and still more of his coat, in one of those Sunday battles; and had not Ashburner hastened to his aid, had probably been completely stripped of both. With such a zeal are these fair ones animated, though, unfortunately for all parties, rather erroneously.

What you tell me of the effect that the limitation of numbers to tonnage, is likely to have on the Slave Trade, gives me the greatest pleasure. Should it amount, in the issue, to an abolition of the traffic, I shall account it indeed an argument of great wisdom

in our youthful minister. A silent, and indirect way of doing it, is, I suppose, the only safe one. At the same time, in how horrid a light does it place the trade itself; when it comes to be proved by consequences, that the mere article of a little elbow-room for the poor creatures in their passage to the islands, could not be secured by an order of Parliament, without the utter annihilation of it! If so it prove, no man deserving to be called a man, can say that it ought to subsist a moment longer.—My writing-time is expended, and breakfast is at hand. With our joint love to the trio, and our best wishes for your good journey to Weston, I remain, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 6, 1788.

" Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear" have compelled me to draw on you for the sum of twenty pounds, payable to John Higgins, Esq. or order. The draft bears date July 5th.—You will excuse my giving you this trouble, in consideration that I am a poet, and can consequently draw for money much easier than I can earn it.

I heard of you a few days since, from Walter Bagot, who called here and told me that you were gone, I think, into Rutlandshire, to settle the accounts of a large estate unliquidated many years. Intricacies, that would turn my brains, are play to you. But I give you joy of a long vacation at hand, when I suppose that even you will find it

pleasant, if not to be idle, at least not to be hemmed around by business.

Yours, ever,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Aug. 28, 1788.

Should you discard me from the number of your correspondents, you would treat me as I seem to deserve, though I do not actually deserve it. I have lately been engaged with company at our house, who resided with us five weeks, and have had much of the rheumatism into the bargain. Not in my fingers, you will say — True. But you know as well as I, that pain, be it where it may, indisposes us to writing.

You express some degree of wonder that I found you out to be sedentary, at least much a

stayer within doors, without any sufficient data for my direction. Now if I should guess your figure and stature with equal success, you will deem me not only a poet but a conjurer. Yet in fact I have no pretensions of that sort. I have only formed a picture of you in my own imagination, as we ever do of a person of whom we think much, though we have never seen that person. Your height I conceive to be about five feet five inches, which though it would make a short man, is yet height enough for a woman. If you insist on an inch or two more, I have no objection. You are not very fat, but somewhat inclined to be fat, and unless you allow yourself a little more air and exercise, will incur some danger of exceeding in your dimensions before you die. Let me, therefore, once more recommend to you to walk a little more, at least in your garden, and to amuse yourself occasionally with pulling up here and there a weed, for it will be an inconvenience to you to be much fatter than you are, at a time of life

when your strength will be naturally on the decline. I have given you a fair complexion, a slight tinge of the rose in your cheeks, dark brown hair, and, if the fashion would give you leave to shew it, an open and well-formed forehead. To all this I add a pair of eyes not quite black, but nearly approaching to that hue, and very animated. I have not absolutely determined on the shape of your nose, or the form of your mouth; but should you tell me that I have in other respects drawn a tolerable likeness, have no doubt but I can describe them too. I assure you that though I have a great desire to read him, I have never seen Lavater, nor have availed myself in the least of any of his rules on this occasion. Ah, Madam! if with all that sensibility of yours, which exposes you to so much sorrow, and necessarily must expose you to it, in a world like this, I have had the good fortune to make you smile, I have then painted you, whether with a strong resem-

blance, or with none at all, to very good purpose.

I had intended to have sent you a little poem, which I have lately finished, but have no room to transcribe it. You shall have it by another opportunity. Breakfast is on the table, and my time also fails, as well as my paper. I rejoice that a cousin of yours found my volumes agreeable to him, for, being your cousin, I will be answerable for his good taste and judgment.

When I wrote last, I was in mourning for a dear and much-valued uncle, Ashley Cowper. He died at the age of eighty-six. My best respects attend Mr. King; and I am, dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 2, 1788.

I rejoice that you and yours reached London safe, especially when I reflect that you performed the journey on a day so fatal, as I understand, to others travelling the same road. I found those comforts in your visit which have formerly sweetened all our interviews, in part restored. I knew you; knew you for the same shepherd who was sent to lead me out of the wilderness into the pasture where the chief Shepherd feeds his flock, and felt my sentiments of affectionate friendship for you the same as ever. But one thing was still wanting, and that thing the crown of all. I shall find it in God's time, if it be not lost for ever. When I say this, I say it trembling; for at what time soever comfort shall come, it will not come without its attendant evil; and whatever good thing may occur in the interval, I have sad

forebodings of the event, having learned by experience that I was born to be persecuted with peculiar fury, and assuredly believing, that such as my lot has been, it will be so to the end. This belief is connected in my mind with an observation I have often made, and is perhaps founded, in great part, upon it: that there is a certain *style* of dispensations maintained by Providence in the dealings of God with every man, which, however the incidents of his life may vary, and though he may be thrown into many different situations, is never exchanged for another. The style of dispensation peculiar to myself has hitherto been that of sudden, violent, unlooked-for change. When I have thought myself falling into the abyss, I have been caught up again; when I have thought myself on the threshold of a happy eternity, I have been thrust down to hell. The rough and the smooth of such a lot, taken together, should perhaps have taught me never to despair; but through an unhappy

propensity in my nature to forebode the worst, they have, on the contrary, operated as an admonition to me never to hope. A firm persuasion that I can never durably enjoy a comfortable state of mind, but must be depressed in proportion as I have been elevated, withers my joys in the bud, and, in a manner, entombs them before they are born: for I have no expectation but of sad vicissitude, and ever believe that the last shock of all will be fatal.

Mr. Bean has still some trouble with his parishioners. The suppression of five public-houses is the occasion. He called on me yesterday morning for advice; though, discreet as he is himself, he has little need of such counsel as I can give him. ——, who is subtle as a dozen foxes, met him on Sunday, exactly at his descent from the pulpit, and proposed to him a general meeting of the parish, in vestry, on the subject. Mr. Bean, attacked so suddenly,

consented; but afterward repented that he had done so, assured as he was that he should be out-voted. There seemed no remedy but to apprise them beforehand that he would meet them indeed, but not with a view to have the question decided by a majority: that he would take that opportunity to make his allegations against each of the houses in question, which if they could refute, well; if not, they could no longer reasonably oppose his measures. This was what he came to submit to my opinion. I could do no less than approve it; and he left me with a purpose to declare his mind to them immediately.

I beg that you will give my affectionate respects to Mr. Bacon, and assure him of my sincere desire that he should think himself perfectly at liberty respecting the mottos, to choose one, or to reject both, as likes him best. I wish also to be remembered with much affec-

tion to Mrs. Cowper, and always rejoice to hear of her well-being.

Believe me, as I truly am, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAREST MADAM, Sept. 25, 1788.

How surprised was I this moment to meet a servant at the gate, who told me that he came from you! He could not have been more welcome, unless he had announced yourself. I am charmed with your kindness and with all your elegant presents. So is Mrs. Unwin, who begs me in particular to thank you warmly for the housewife, the very thing she had just begun to want. In the fire-screen

you have sent me an enigma which at present I have not the ingenuity to expound; but some Muse will help me, or I shall meet with somebody able to instruct me. In all that I have seen besides, for that I have not yet seen, I admire both the taste and the execution. A tooth-pick case I had: but one so large, that no modern waistcoat pocket could possibly contain it. It was some years since the Dean of Durham's, for whose sake I valued it, though to me useless. Yours is come opportunely to supply the deficiency, and shall be my constant companion to its last thread. The cakes and the apples we will eat, remembering who sent them; and when I say this, I will add also, that when we have neither apples nor cakes to eat, we will still remember you.—What the MS. poem can be, that you suppose to have been written by me, I am not able to guess; and since you will not allow that I have guessed your person well, am become shy of exercising conjecture on any meaner subject.

Perhaps they may be some mortuary verses, which I wrote last year, at the request of a certain parish-clerk. If not, and you have never seen them, I will send you them hereafter.

You have been at Bedford. Bedford is but twelve miles from Weston. When you are at home, we are but eighteen miles asunder. Is it possible that such a paltry interval can separate us always? I will never believe it. Our house is going to be filled by a cousin of mine and her train, who will, I hope, spend the winter with us. I cannot, therefore, repeat my invitation at present, but expect me to be very troublesome on that theme next summer. I could almost scold you for not making Weston in your way home from Bedford. Though I am neither a relation, nor quite eighty-six years of age, believe me I should as much rejoice to see you and Mr. King, as if I were both.

(Mrs. Unwin has this moment opened the screen, which I admire, and shall find particularly useful.)

I send you, my dear madam, the poem I promised you, and shall be glad to send you any thing and every thing I write, as fast as it flows. Behold my two volumes! which, though your old acquaintance, I thought, might receive an additional recommendation in the shape of a present from myself.

What I have written I know not, for all has been scribbled in haste. I will not tempt your servant's honesty, who seems by his countenance to have a great deal, being equally watchful to preserve uncorrupted the honesty of my own.

I am, my dearest madam, with a thousand thanks for this stroke of friendship, which I

feel at my heart, and with Mrs. Unwin's very best respects, most sincerely yours,

W. C.

P. S. My two hares died little more than two years since; one of them aged ten years, the other eleven years and eleven months.

Our compliments attend Mr. King.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Oct. 11, 1788.

You are perfectly secure from all danger of being overwhelmed with presents from me. It is not much that a poet can possibly have it in his power to give. When he has presented his own works, he may be supposed to have exhausted all means of donation.

They are his only superfluity. There was a time, but that time was before I commenced writer for the press, when I amused myself in a way somewhat similar to yours; allowing, I mean, for the difference between masculine and female operations. The scissors and the needle are your chief implements; mine were the chisel and the saw. In those days you might have been in some danger of too plentiful a return for your favours. Tables, such as they were, and joint-stools such as never were, might have travelled to Perton-hall in most inconvenient abundance. But I have long since discontinued this practice, and many others which I found it necessary to adopt, that I might escape the worst of all evils, both in itself and in its consequences—an idle life. Many arts I have exercised with this view, for which nature never designed me; though among them were some in which I arrived at considerable proficiency, by mere dint of the most heroic perseverance. There is not a

'squire in all this country who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself; and in the article of cabbage-nets, I had no superior. I even had the hardiness to take in hand the pencil, and studied a whole year the art of drawing. Many figures were the fruit of my labours, which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature. But before the year was ended, I had occasion to wonder at the progress that may be made, in despite of natural deficiency, by dint alone of practice; for I actually produced three landscapes, which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed. I then judged it high time to exchange this occupation for another, lest, by any subsequent productions of inferior merit, I should forfeit the honour I had so fortunately acquired. But gardening was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began

with lettuces and cauliflowers: from them I proceeded to cucumbers; next to melons. I then purchased an orange-tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a green-house, and accordingly built one; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do.

When I left Olney for Weston, I could no longer have a green-house of my own; but in a neighbour's garden I find a better, of which the sole management is consigned to me.

I had need take care, when I begin a letter, that the subject with which I set off be of some importance; for before I can exhaust it, be it what it may, I have generally filled my paper. But self is a subject inexhaustible, which is the reason that though I have said little, and nothing, I am afraid, worth your hearing, I have only room to add, that I am, my dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

P. S. Mrs. Unwin bids me present her best compliments, and say how much she shall be obliged to you for the receipt to make that most excellent cake which came hither

in its native pan. There is no production of yours that will not be always most welcome at Weston.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 29, 1788.

Not to fill my paper with apologies, I will only say, that you know my occupation, and how little time it leaves me for other employments; in which, had I leisure for them, I could take much pleasure. Letter-writing would be one of the most agreeable, and especially writing to you.

Poor Jenny Raban is declining fast toward the grave, and as fast aspiring to the skies. I expected to have heard yesterday of her death; but learned, on enquiry, that she was

better. Dr. Kerr has seen her, and by virtue, I suppose, of his prescriptions, her fits, with which she was frequently troubled, are become less frequent. But there is no reason, I believe, to look for her recovery. Her case is a consumption, into which I saw her sliding swiftly in the spring. There is not much to be lamented, or that ought to be so, in the death of those that go to glory. She was a beautiful girl, and perhaps may have left a heart-ache for a legacy to some poor swain at Olney; though I never heard, beautiful as she was, that she had any *lovyers*. Many an ugly bundle can find an husband in such a place as Olney, while Venus herself would shine there unnoticed.

If you find many blots, and my writing illegible, you must pardon them, in consideration of the cause. Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Unwin are both talking as if they designed to make themselves amends for the silence they

are enjoined while I sit translating Homer. Mrs. Unwin is preparing the breakfast, and not having seen each other since they parted to go to bed, they have consequently a deal to communicate.

I have seen Mr. Greatheed, both in his own house and here. Prosperity sits well on him, and I cannot find that this advantageous change in his condition has made any alteration either in his views or his behaviour. The winter is gliding merrily away while my cousin is with us. She annihilates the difference between cold and heat, gloomy skies and cloudless. I have written I know not what, and with the dispatch of legerdemain; but with the utmost truth and consciousness of what I say, assure you, my dear friend, that I am

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Dec. 6, 1788.

It must, if you please, be a point agreed between us, that we will not make punctuality in writing the test of our regard for each other, lest we should incur the danger of pronouncing and suffering by an unjust sentence, and this mutually. I have told you, I believe, that the half hour before breakfast is my only letter-writing opportunity. In summer I rise rather early, and consequently at that season can find more time for scribbling than at present. If I enter my study now before nine, I find all at sixes and sevens; for servants will take, in part at least, the liberty claimed by their masters. That you may not suppose us all sluggards alike, it is necessary, however, that I should add a word or two on this subject, in justification of Mrs. Unwin, who, because the days are too

short for the important concerns of knitting stockings and mending them, rises generally by candle-light; a practice so much in the stile of all the ladies of antiquity who were good for any thing, that it is impossible not to applaud it.

Mrs. Battison being dead, I began to fear that you would have no more calls to Bedford; but the marriage, so near at hand, of the young lady you mention with a gentleman of that place, gives me hope again that you may occasionally approach us as heretofore, and that on some of those occasions you will perhaps find your way to Weston. The deaths of some and the marriages of others make a new world of it every thirty years. Within that space of time, the majority are displaced, and a new generation has succeeded. Here and there one is permitted to stay a little longer, that there may not be wanting a few grave Dons like myself, to make the observation. This thought struck me

very forcibly the other day, on reading a paper called the County Chronicle, which came hither in the package of some books from London. It contained news from Hertfordshire, and informed me, among other things, that at Great Berkhampstead, the place of my birth, there is hardly a family left of all those with whom, in my early days, I was so familiar. The houses, no doubt, remain, but the inhabitants are only to be found now by their grave-stones; and it is certain that I might pass through a town, in which I was once a sort of principal figure, unknowing and unknown. They are happy who have not taken up their rest in a world fluctuating as the sea, and passing away with the rapidity of a river. I wish to my heart that yourself and Mr. King may long continue, as you have already long continued, exceptions from the general truth of this remark. You doubtless married early, and the thirty-six years elapsed may have yet other years to succeed them. I do not forget that your relation

Mrs. Battison lived to the age of eighty-six. I am glad of her longevity, because it seems to afford some assurance of yours; and I hope to know you better yet before you die.

I have never seen the Observer, but am pleased with being handsomely spoken of by an old school-fellow. Cumberland and I boarded together in the same house at Westminster. He was at that time clever, and I suppose has given proof sufficient to the world that he is still clever: but of all that he has written, it has never fallen in my way to read a syllable, except perhaps in a magazine or review, the sole sources, at present, of all my intelligence. Addison speaks of persons who grow dumb in the study of eloquence, and I have actually studied Homer till I am become a mere ignoramus in every other province of literature.

An almost general cessation of egg-laying among the hens has made it impossible for

Mrs. Unwin to enterprize a cake. She, however, returns you a thousand thanks for the receipt; and being now furnished with the necessary ingredients, will begin directly. My letter-writing time is spent, and I must now to Homer. With my best respects to Mr. King, I remain, dear Madam,

Most affectionately yours,

W. C.

P. S. When I wrote last, I told you, I believe, that Lady Hesketh was with us. She is with us now, making a cheerful winter for us at Weston. The acquisition of a new friend, and, at a late day, the recovery of the friend of our youth, are two of the chief comforts of which this life is susceptible.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 9, 1788.

That I may return you the Latin manuscript as soon as possible, I take a short opportunity to scratch a few hasty lines, that it may not arrive alone. I have made here and there an alteration, which appeared to me for the better; but, on the whole, I cannot but wonder at your adroitness in a business to which you have been probably at no time much accustomed, and which, for many years, you have not at all practised. If, when you shall have written the whole, you shall wish for a corrector of the rest, so far as my own skill in the matter goes, it is entirely at your service.

Lady Hesketh is obliged to you for the part of your letter in which she is mentioned, and returns her compliments. She loves all my friends, and consequently cannot be indif-

ferent to you. The Throckmortons are gone into Norfolk, on a visit to Lord Petre. They will probably return this day fortnight. Mr. F—— is now preacher at Ravenstone. Mr. C—— still preaches here. The latter is warmly attended. The former has heard him, having, I suppose, a curiosity to know by what charm he held his popularity; but whether he has heard him to his own edification, or not, is more than I can say. Probably he wonders, for I have heard that he is a sensible man. His successful competitor is wise in nothing but his knowledge of the gospel.

I am summoned to breakfast, and am, my dear friend, with our best love to Mrs. Newton, Miss Catlett, and yourself,

Most affectionately yours,

W. C.

I have not the assurance to call this an answer to your letter, in which were many

things deserving much notice: but it is the best that, in the present moment, I am able to send you.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Jan. 29, 1789.

This morning I said to Mrs. Unwin, "I must write to Mrs. King: her long silence alarms me—something has happened." These words of mine proved only a prelude to the arrival of your messenger with his most welcome charge, for which I return you my sincerest thanks. You have sent me the very things I wanted, and which I should have continued to want, had not you sent them. As often as the wine is set on the table, I have said to myself, This is all very well; but I have no bottle-stands: and myself as

often replied, No matter; you can make shift without them. Thus I and myself have conferred together many a day; and you, as if you had been privy to the conference, have kindly supplied the deficiency, and put an end to the debate for ever.

When your messenger arrived I was beginning to dress for dinner, being engaged to dine with my neighbour Mr. Throckmorton, from whose house I am just returned, and snatch a few moments before supper to tell you how much I am obliged to you. You will not, therefore, find me very prolix at present; but it shall not be long before you shall hear further from me. Your honest old neighbour sleeps under our roof, and will be gone in the morning before I shall have seen him.

I have more items than one by which to remember the late frost: it has cost me the bitterest uneasiness. Mrs. Unwin got a fall

on the gravel-walk covered with ice, which has confined her to an upper chamber ever since. She neither broke nor dislocated any bones; but received such a contusion below the hip, as crippled her completely. She now begins to recover, after having been helpless as a child for a whole fortnight; but so slowly at present, that her amendment is even now almost imperceptible.

Engaged, however, as I am with my own private anxieties, I yet find leisure to interest myself not a little in the distresses of the Royal Family, especially in those of the Queen. The Lord Chancellor called the other morning on Lord Stafford: entering the room, he threw his hat into a sofa at the fire-side, and clasping his hands, said, I have heard of distress, and I have read of it; but I never saw distress equal to that of the Queen. This I know from particular and certain authority.

My dear Madam, I have not time to enlarge at present on this subject, or to touch any other. Once more, therefore, thanking you for your kindness, of which I am truly sensible; and thanking, too, Mr. King for the favour he has done me in subscribing to my Homer, and at the same time begging you to make my best compliments to him, I conclude myself, with Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgments of your most acceptable present to her,

Your obliged and affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, March 12, 1789.

I feel myself in no small degree unworthy of the kind solicitude which you express concerning me and my welfare, after a silence so much longer than I gave you reason to expect.

I should indeed account myself inexcusable, had I not to allege, in my defence, perpetual engagements of such a kind as would by no means be dispensed with. Had Homer alone been in question, Homer should have made room for you: but I have had other work in hand at the same time, equally pressing, and more laborious. Let it suffice to say, that I have not wilfully neglected you for a moment, and that you have never been out of my thoughts a day together. But I begin to perceive, that if a man will be an author, he must live neither to himself nor to his friends so much as to others, whom he never saw nor shall see.

My promise to follow my last letter with another speedily, which promise I kept so ill, is not the only one which I am conscious of having made to you, and but very indifferently performed. I promised you all the smaller pieces that I should produce, as fast as occasion

called them forth, and leisure occurred to write them. Now, the fact is, that I have produced several since I made that fair profession, of which I have sent you hardly any. The reason is, that, transcribed into the body of a letter, they would leave me no room for prose; and that other conveyance than by the post I cannot find, even after enquiry made among all my neighbours for a traveller to Kimbolton. Well, we shall see you, I hope, in the summer; and then I will show you all. I will transcribe one for you every morning before breakfast, as long as they last; and when you come down, you shall find it laid on your napkin. I sent one last week to London, which by some kind body or another, I know not whom, is to be presented to the Queen. The subject, as you may guess, is the King's recovery; a theme that might make a bad poet a good one, and a good one excel himself. This, too, you shall see when we meet, unless

it should bounce upon you before, from some periodical register of all such matters.

I shall commission my cousin, who lately left us, to procure for me the book you mention. Being, and having long been, so deep in the business of translation, it was natural that I should have many thoughts on that subject. I have accordingly had as many as would of themselves, perhaps, make a volume, and shall be glad to compare them with those of any writer recommended by Mr. Martyn. When you write next to that gentleman, I beg you, Madam, to present my compliments to him, with thanks both for the mention of Mr. Twining's book, and for the honour of his name among my subscribers.

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Mrs. Unwin, though two months ago she fell, is still lame. The severity of the season, which has not suffered her to exercise her-

self in the open air, has, no doubt, retarded her recovery: but she recovers, though even more slowly than she walks. She joins me in best respects to yourself and Mr. King, and in hearty desires to see you both at Weston. Forgive the past. I make no more promises, except to remain always, my dear Madam,

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, April 22, 1789.

Having waited hitherto in expectation of the messenger whom, in your last, you mentioned a design to send, I have at length sagaciously surmised that you delay to send him in expectation of hearing first from me. I would that his errand hither were better worthy the journey. I shall have no very voluminous packet to charge him with when he

comes. Such, however, as it is, it is ready; and has received an addition in the interim of one copy, which would not have made a part of it, had your Mercury arrived here sooner. It is on the subject of the Queen's visit to London on the night of the illuminations. Mrs. Unwin, knowing the burthen that lies on my back too heavy for any but Atlantean shoulders, has kindly performed the copyist's part, and transcribed all that I had to send you. Observe, Madam, I do not write this to hasten your messenger hither, but merely to account for my own silence. It is probable that the later he arrives, the more he will receive when he comes; for I never fail to write when I think I have found a favourable subject.

We mourn that we must give up the hope of seeing you and Mr. King at Weston. Had our correspondence commenced sooner, we had certainly found the means of meeting; but it seems that we were doomed to know each

other too late for a meeting in this world. May a better world make us amends, as it certainly will, if I ever reach a better! Our interviews here are but imperfect pleasures at the best; and generally from such as promise us most gratification, we receive the most disappointment. But disappointment is, I suppose, confined to the planet on which we dwell; the only one in the universe, probably, that is inhabited by sinners.

I did not know, or even suspect, that when I received your last messenger, I received so eminent a disciple of Hippocrates; a physician of such absolute control over disease and the human constitution, as to be able to put a pestilence into his pocket, confine it there, and to let it loose at his pleasure. We are much indebted to him, that he did not give us here a stroke of his ability.

I must not forget to mention that I have received (probably not without your privity)

Mr. Twining's valuable volume. For a long time I supposed it to have come from my bookseller, who now and then sends me a new publication; but I find, on enquiry, that it came not from him. I beg, Madam, if you are aware that Mr. Twining himself sent it, or your friend Mr. Martyn, that you will negotiate for me on the occasion, and contrive to convey to the obliging donor my very warmest thanks. I am impatient till he receives them. I have not yet had time to do justice to a writer so sensible, elegant, and entertaining, by a complete perusal of his work; but I have with pleasure sought out all those passages to which Mr. Martyn was so good as to refer me, and am delighted to observe the exact agreement in opinion on the subject of translation in general, and on that of Mr. Pope's in particular, that subsists between Mr. Twining and myself. With Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, I remain, my dear Madam, your obliged and affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, April 30, 1789.

I thought to have sent you, by the return of your messenger, a letter; at least, something like one: but instead of sleeping here, as I supposed he would, he purposes to pass the night at Lavendon, a village three miles off. This design of his is but just made known to me, and it is now near seven in the evening. Therefore, lest he should be obliged to feel out his way, in an unknown country, in the dark, I am forced to scribble a hasty word or two, instead of devoting, as I intended, the whole evening to your service.

A thousand thanks for your basket, and all the good things that it contained; particularly for my brother's Poems, whose hand-writing struck me the moment I saw it. They gave me some feelings of a melancholy kind, but not

painful. I will return them to you by the next opportunity. I wish that mine, which I send you, may prove half as pleasant to you as your excellent cakes and apples have proved to us. You will then think yourself sufficiently recompensed for your obliging present. If a crab-stock can transform a pippin into a nonpareil, what may not I effect in a translation of Homer? Alas! I fear, nothing half so valuable.

I have learned, at length, that I am indebted for Twining's Aristotle to a relation of mine, General Cowper.

Pardon me that I quit you so soon. It is not willingly; but I have compassion on your poor messenger.

Adieu, my dear Madam, and believe me

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

DEAREST MADAM, May 30, 1789.

Many thanks for your kind and valuable dispatches, none of which, except your letter, I have yet had time to read; for true it is, and a sad truth too, that I was in bed when your messenger arrived. He waits only for my answer, for which reason I answer as speedily as I can.

I am glad if my poetical packet pleased you. Those stanzas on the Queen's visit were presented some time since, by Miss Goldsworthy, to the Princess Augusta, who has probably given them to the Queen; but of their reception I have heard nothing. I gratified myself by complimenting two sovereigns whom I love and honour; and that gratification will be my reward. It would, indeed, be unreasonable to expect that persons who keep a Laureat in

constant pay, should have either praise or emolument to spare for every volunteer who may choose to make them his subject.

I will take the greatest care of the papers with which you have entrusted me, and will return them by the next opportunity. It is very unfortunate that the people of Bedford should choose to have the small-pox, just at the season when it would be sure to prevent our meeting. God only knows, Madam, when we shall meet, or whether at all in this world; but certain it is, that whether we meet or not,

I am most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Aug. 1, 1789.

The post brings me no letters that do not grumble at my silence. Had not you,

therefore, taken me to task as roundly as others, I should have concluded you, perhaps, more indifferent to my epistles than the rest of my correspondents; of whom one says—"I shall be glad when you have finished Homer; then possibly you will find a little leisure for an old friend." Another says—"I don't choose to be neglected, unless you equally neglect every one else." Thus I hear of it with both ears, and shall, till I appear in the shape of two great quarto volumes, the composition of which, I confess, engrosses me to a degree that gives my friends, to whom I feel myself much obliged for their anxiety to hear from me, but too much reason to complain. Johnson told Mr. Martyn the truth; but your inference from that truth is not altogether so just as most of your conclusions are. Instead of finding myself the more at leisure because my long labour draws to a close, I find myself the more occupied. As when a horse approaches the

goal, he does not, unless he be jaded, slacken his pace, but quickens it: even so it fares with me. The end is in view; I seem almost to have reached the mark; and the nearness of it inspires me with fresh alacrity. But, be it known to you that I have still two books of the Odyssey before me, and, when they are finished, shall have almost the whole eight and forty to revise. Judge, then, my dear Madam, if it is yet time for me to play, or to gratify myself with scribbling to those I love. No. It is still necessary that waking I should be all absorpt in Homer, and that sleeping I should dream of nothing else.

I am a great lover of good paintings, but no connoisseur, having never had an opportunity to become one. In the last forty years of my life, I have hardly seen six pictures that were worth looking at; for I was never a frequenter of auctions, having

never had any spare money in my pocket; and the public exhibitions of them in London had hardly taken place when I left it. My cousin, who is with us, saw the gentleman whose pieces you mention, on the top of a scaffold, copying a famous picture in the Vatican. She has seen some of his performances, and much admires them.

You have had a great loss, and a loss that admits of no consolation, except such as will naturally suggest itself to *you;* such, I mean, as the scripture furnishes. We must all leave, or be left; and it is the circumstance of all others that makes long life the least desirable, that others go while we stay, till at last we find ourselves alone, like a tree on a hill-top.

Accept, my dear Madam, mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to yourself and

Mr. King, and believe me, however unfrequent in telling you that I am so,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 12, 1789.

I rejoice that you and Mrs. Hill are so agreeably occupied in your retreat. August, I hope, will make us amends for the gloom of its many wintry predecessors. We are now gathering from our meadows, not hay, but muck; such stuff as deserves not the carriage, which yet it must have, that the after-crop may have leave to grow. The Ouse has hardly deigned to run in his channel since the summer began.

My muse were a vixen, if she were not always ready to fly in obedience to your com-

mands. But what can be done? I can write nothing in the few hours that remain to me of this day, that will be fit for your purpose; and, unless I could dispatch what I write by to-morrow's post, it would not reach you in time. I must add, too, that my friend the vicar of the next parish* engaged me, the day before yesterday, to furnish him by next Sunday with a hymn, to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the children of the Sunday-school†: of which hymn I have not yet produced a syllable. I am somewhat in the case of lawyer Dowling, in Tom Jones; and could I split myself into as many poets as there are Muses, could find employment for them all.

Adieu, my dear friend,

I am ever yours,

W. C.

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* Olney.

† "Hear, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r," &c.

Vide Poems, vol. 3. page 138.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 16, 1789.

Mrs. Newton and you are both kind and just in believing that I do not love you less when I am long silent. Perhaps a friend of mine, who wishes me to have him always in my thoughts, is never so effectually possessed of the accomplishment of that wish, as when I have been long his debtor; for *then* I think of him not only every day, but day and night, and all day long. But I confess at the same time, that my thoughts of you will be more pleasant to myself when I shall have exonerated my conscience by giving you the letter so long your due. Therefore, here it comes;--little worth your having; but payment, such as it is, that you have a right to expect, and that is essential to my own tranquillity.

That the Iliad and the Odyssey should have proved the occasion of my suspending my correspondence with you, is a proof how little we foresee the consequences of what we publish. Homer, I dare say, hardly at all suspected that at the fag-end of time two personages would appear, the one ycleped Sir Newton, and the other Sir Cowper, who, loving each other heartily, would nevertheless suffer the pains of an interrupted intercourse, his poems the cause. So, however, it has happened; and though it would not, I suppose, extort from the old bard a single sigh, if he knew it, yet to me it suggests the serious reflection above-mentioned. An author by profession had need narrowly to watch his pen, lest a line should escape it which by possibility may do mischief, when he has been long dead and buried. What we have done, when we have written a book, will never be known till the day of judgment: then the account will be liquidated, and all the good

that it has occasioned, and all the evil, will witness either for or against us.

I am now in the last book of the Odyssey, yet have still, I suppose, half a year's work before me. The accurate revisal of two such voluminous poems can hardly cost me less. I rejoice, however, that the goal is in prospect; for though it has cost me years to run this race, it is only now that I begin to have a glimpse of it. That I shall never receive any proportionable pecuniary recompense for my long labours is pretty certain; and as to any fame that I may possibly gain by it, *that* is a commodity that daily sinks in value, in measure as the consummation of all things approaches. In the day when the lion shall dandle the kid, and a little child shall lead them, the world will have lost all relish for the fabulous legends of antiquity, and Homer and his translator may budge off the stage together. Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 1, 1789.

On this fine first of December, under an unclouded sky, and in a room full of sunshine, I address myself to the payment of a debt long in arrear, but never forgotten by me, however I may have seemed to forget it. I will not waste time in apologies. I have but one, and that one will suggest itself unmentioned. I will only add, that you are the first to whom I write, of several to whom I have not written many months, who all have claims upon me; and who, I flatter myself, are all grumbling at my silence. In your case, perhaps, I have been less anxious than in the case of some others; because, if you have not heard from myself, you have heard from Mrs. Unwin. From her you have learned that I live, that I am as well as usual, and that I translate Homer:—three short items, but in which is comprised

the whole detail of my present history. Thus I fared when you were here; thus I have fared ever since you were here; and thus, if it please God, I shall continue to fare for some time longer: for, though the work is done, it is not finished; a riddle which you, who are a brother of the press, will solve easily. I have also been the less anxious, because I have had frequent opportunities to hear of you; and have always heard that you are in good health and happy. Of Mrs. Newton, too, I have heard more favourable accounts of late, which have given us both the sincerest pleasure. Mrs. Unwin's case is, at present, my only subject of uneasiness, that is not immediately personal, and properly my own. She has almost constant head-aches; almost a constant pain in her side, which nobody understands; and her lameness, within the last half year, is very little amended. But her spirits are good, because supported by comforts which depend not on the state

of the body; and I do not know that, with all these pains, her looks are at all altered since we had the happiness to see you here, unless, perhaps, they are altered a little for the better. I have thus given you as circumstantial an account of ourselves as I could; the most interesting matter, I verily believe with which I could have filled my paper, unless I could have made spiritual mercies to myself the subject. In my next, perhaps, I shall find leisure to bestow a few lines on what is doing in France, and in the Austrian Netherlands; though, to say the truth, I am much better qualified to write an essay on the siege of Troy, than to descant on any of these modern revolutions. I question if, in either of the countries just mentioned, full of bustle and tumult as they are, there be a single character whom Homer, were he living, would deign to make his hero. The populace are the heroes now, and the stuff of which gen-

tlemen heroes are made, seems to be all expended.

I will endeavour that my next letter shall not follow this so tardily as this has followed the last; and with our joint affectionate remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Newton, remain as ever,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Jan. 4, 1790.

Your long silence has occasioned me to have a thousand anxious thoughts about you. So long it has been, that whether I now write to a Mrs. King at present on earth, or already in Heaven, I know not. I have friends whose silence troubles me less, though I have known

them longer; because, if I hear not from themselves, I yet hear from others that they are still living, and likely to live. But if your letters cease to bring me news of your welfare, from whom can I gain the desirable intelligence? The birds of the air will not bring it, and third person there is none between us by whom it might be conveyed. Nothing is plain to me on this subject, but that either you are dead, or very much indisposed; or, which would affect me with perhaps as deep a concern, though of a different kind, very much offended. The latter of these suppositions I think the least probable, conscious as I am of an habitual desire to offend nobody, especially a lady, and especially a lady to whom I have many obligations. But all the three solutions above-mentioned are very uncomfortable; and if you live, and can send me one that will cause me less pain than either of them, I conjure you, by the charity and benevolence which I know influence

you upon all occasions, to communicate it without delay.

It is possible, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, that you are not become perfectly indifferent to me, and to what concerns me. I will therefore add a word or two on a subject which once interested you, and which is, for that reason, worthy to be mentioned, though truly for no other—meaning myself. I am well, and have been so (uneasiness on your account excepted) both in mind and body, ever since I wrote to you last. I have still the same employment. Homer in the morning, and Homer in the evening, as constant as the day goes round. In the Spring I hope to send the Iliad and Odyssey to the press. So much for me and my occupations. Poor Mrs. Unwin has hitherto had but an unpleasant winter; unpleasant as constant pain, either in the head or side, could make it. She joins me in affec-

tionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King, and in earnest wishes that you will soon favour me with a line that shall relieve me from all my perplexities.

I am, dear Madam,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Jan. 18, 1790.

The sincerest thanks attend you, both from Mrs. Unwin and myself, for many good things, on some of which I have already regaled with an affectionate remembrance of the giver. We have not yet opened the cocoa-nut, but it was particularly welcome. It is medicine to Mrs. Unwin, who finds it always more beneficial to her health than any thing properly called medicinal. We are truly sorry that you are so much a sufferer by the rheumatism. I also

occasionally suffer by the same disorder, and in years past was much tormented by it. I can therefore pity you.

The report that informed you of enquiries made by Mrs. Unwin after a house at Huntingdon was unfounded. We have no thought of quitting Weston, unless the same Providence that led us hither, should lead us away. It is a situation perfectly agreeable to us both; and to me in particular, who write much and walk much, and consequently love silence and retirement, one of the most eligible. If it has a fault, it is that it seems to threaten us with a certainty of never seeing you. But may we not hope that when a milder season shall have improved your health, we may yet, notwithstanding the distance, be favoured with Mr. King's and your company? A better season will likewise improve the roads, and exactly in proportion as it does so, will, in effect, lessen the interval between us. I know not if Mr. Martyn

be a mathematician, but most probably he is a good one, and he can tell you that this is a proposition mathematically true, though rather paradoxical in appearance.

I am obliged to that gentleman, and *much* obliged to him for his favourable opinion of my translation. What parts of Homer are particularly intended by the critics, as those in which I shall probably fall short, I know not; but let me fail where I may, I shall fail no where through want of endeavours to avoid it. The under parts of the poems (those I mean which are merely narrative,) I find the most difficult. These can only be supported by the diction, and on these, for that reason, I have bestowed the most abundant labour. Fine similes, and fine speeches take care of themselves; but the exact process of slaying a sheep and dressing it, it is not so easy to dignify in our language, and in our measure. But I shall have the comfort, as I said, to reflect, that whatever may be here-

after laid to my charge, the sin of idleness will not. Justly, at least, it never will. In the mean time, my dear Madam, I whisper to you a secret;—not to fall short of the original in every thing, is impossible.

I send you, I believe, all my pieces that you have never seen. Did I not send you Catharina? If not, you shall have it hereafter. I am, dear Madam, ever, ever in haste,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 5, 1790.

Your kind letter deserved a speedier answer, but you know my excuse, which were I to repeat always, my letters would resemble the fag-end of a newspaper, where we always

find the price of stocks, detailed with little or no variation.

When January returns, you have your feelings concerning me, and such as prove the faithfulness of your friendship. I have mine also concerning myself, but they are of a cast different from yours. Yours have a mixture of sympathy and tender solicitude, which makes them, perhaps, not altogether unpleasant. Mine, on the contrary, are of an unmixed nature, and consist simply, and merely, of the most alarming apprehensions. Twice has that month returned upon me, accompanied by such horrors as I have no reason to suppose ever made part of the experience of any other man. I accordingly look forward to it, and meet it, with a dread not to be imagined. I number the nights as they pass, and in the morning bless myself that another night is gone, and no harm has happened. This may argue, perhaps, some imbecility of mind, and no small degree

of it; but it is natural, I believe, and so natural as to be necessary and unavoidable. I know that God is not governed by secondary causes, in any of his operations, and that, on the contrary, they are all so many agents, in his hand, which strike only when he bids them. I know consequently that one month is as dangerous to me as another, and that in the middle of summer, at noon-day, and in the clear sunshine, I am, in reality, unless guarded by him, as much exposed, as when fast asleep at midnight, and in mid-winter. But we are not always the wiser for our knowledge, and I can no more avail myself of mine, than if it were in the head of another man, and not in my own. I have heard of bodily aches and ails that have been particularly troublesome when the season returned in which the hurt that occasioned them was received. The mind, I believe, (with my own, however, I am sure it is so,) is liable to similar periodical affection. But February is come; January, my terror, is passed; and some

shades of the gloom that attended his presence, have passed with him. I look forward with a little cheerfulness to the buds and the leaves that will soon appear, and say to myself, till they turn yellow I will make myself easy. The year will go round, and January will approach. I shall tremble again, and I know it; but in the mean time I will be as comfortable as I can. Thus, in respect of peace of mind, such as it is that I enjoy, I subsist, as the poor are vulgarly said to do, from hand to mouth; and, of a Christian, such as you once knew me, am, by a strange transformation, become an Epicurean philosopher, bearing this motto on my mind,—*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere.*

I have run on in a strain that the beginning of your letter suggested to me, with such impetuosity, that I have not left myself opportunity to write more by the present post: and being unwilling that you should wait longer

for what will be worth nothing when you get it, will only express the great pleasure we feel on hearing, as we did lately from Mr. Bull, that Mrs. Newton is so much better.

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, March 12, 1790.

I live in such a nook, have so few opportunities of hearing news, and so little time to read it, that to me, to begin a letter seems always a sort of forlorn hope. Can it be possible, I say to myself, that I should have any thing to communicate? These misgivings have an ill effect, so far as my punctuality is concerned, and are apt to deter me from the business of letter-writing, as from an enterprise altogether impracticable

I will not say that you are more pleased with my trifles than they deserve, lest I should seem to call your judgment in question; but I suspect that a little partiality to the brother of my brother, enters into the opinion you form of them. No matter, however, by what you are influenced, it is for my interest that you should like them at any rate, because, such as they are, they are the only return I can make you for all your kindness. This consideration will have two effects; it will have a tendency to make me more industrious in the production of such pieces, and more attentive to the manner in which I write them. This reminds me of a piece in your possession, which I will entreat you to commit to the flames, because I am somewhat ashamed of it. To make you amends, I hereby promise to send you a new edition of it when time shall serve, delivered from the passages that I dislike in the first, and in other respects amended. The

piece that I mean, is one entitled—"To Lady Hesketh on her furnishing for me our house at Weston"—or, as the lawyers say, words to that amount. I have, likewise, since I sent you the last packet, been delivered of two or three other brats, and, as the year proceeds, shall probably add to the number. All that come, shall be basketed in time, and conveyed to your door.

I have lately received from a female cousin of mine in Norfolk, whom I have not seen these five and thirty years, a picture of my own mother. She died when I wanted two days of being six years old; yet I remember her perfectly, find the picture a strong likeness of her, and because her memory has been ever precious to me, have written a poem on the receipt of it: a poem which, one excepted, I had more pleasure in writing than any that I ever wrote. That one was addressed to a lady whom I expect in a

few minutes to come down to breakfast, and who has supplied to me the place of my own mother—my own invaluable mother, these six and twenty years. Some sons may be said to have had many fathers, but a plurality of mothers is not common.

Adieu, my dear Madam, be assured that I always think of you with much esteem and affection, and am, with mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to you and yours, most unfeignedly your friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 2, 1790.

I am still at the old sport—Homer all the morning, and Homer all the evening.

Thus have I been held in constant employment, I know not exactly how many, but I believe these six years, an interval of eight months excepted. It is now become so familiar to me to take Homer from my shelf at a certain hour, that I shall, no doubt, continue to take him from my shelf at the same time, even after I have ceased to want him. That period is not far distant. I am now giving the last touches to a work which, had I foreseen the difficulty of it, I should never have meddled with; but which, having at length nearly finished it to my mind, I shall discontinue with regret.

My very best compliments attend Mrs. Hill, whom I love, unsight unseen, as they say; but yet truly.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, June 14, 1790.

I have hardly a scrap of paper belonging to me that is not scribbled over with blank verse; and taking out your letter from a bundle of others, this moment, I find it thus inscribed on the seal side.

———meantime his steeds
Snorted, by Myrmidons detain'd, and loosed
From their own master's chariot, foam'd to fly.

You will easily guess to what they belong; and I mention the circumstance merely in proof of my perpetual engagement to Homer, whether at home or abroad; for when I committed these lines to the back of your letter, I was rambling at a considerable distance from home. I set one foot on a mole-hill, placed my hat with the crown upward on my knee, laid your letter upon it, and with a pencil

wrote the fragment that I have sent you. In the same posture I have written many and many a passage of a work which I hope soon to have done with. But all this is foreign to what I intended when I first took pen in hand. My purpose then was, to excuse my long silence as well as I could, by telling you that I am at present not only a labourer in verse, but in prose also, having been requested by a friend, to whom I could not refuse it, to translate for him a series of Latin letters received from a Dutch minister of the gospel at the Cape of Good Hope. With this additional occupation you will be sensible that my hands are full; and it is a truth that, except to yourself, I would, just at this time, have written to nobody.

I felt a true concern for what you told me in your last respecting the ill-state of health of your much-valued friend Mr. Martyn. You say, if I knew half his worth, I should, with

you, wish his longer continuance below. Now you must understand that, ignorant as I am of Mr. Martyn, except by your report of him, I do nevertheless sincerely wish it—and that, both for your sake and my own; nor less for the sake of the public. For your sake, because you love and esteem him highly; for the sake of the public, because, should it please God to take him before he has completed his great botanical work, I suppose no other person will be able to finish it so well; and for my own sake, because I know he has a kind and favourable opinion beforehand of my translation, and consequently, should it justify his prejudice when it appears, he will stand my friend against an army of Cambridge critics.—It would have been strange indeed if *self* had not peeped out on this subject.—I beg you will present my best respects to him, and assure him that were it possible he could visit Weston, I should be most happy to receive him.

Mrs. Unwin would have been employed in transcribing my rhimes for you, would her health have permitted; but it is very seldom that she can write without being much a sufferer by it. She has almost a constant pain in her side, which forbids it. As soon as it leaves her, or much abates, she will be glad to work for you.

I am, like you and Mr. King, an admirer of clouds, but only when there are blue intervals, and pretty wide ones too, between them. One cloud is too much for me, but a hundred are not too many. So with this riddle and with my best respects to Mr. King, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's to you both,—I remain, my dear Madam,

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, July 16, 1790.

Taking it for granted that this will find you at Perton-hall, I follow you with an early line, and a hasty one, to tell you how much we rejoice to have seen yourself and Mr. King; and how much regret you have left behind you. The wish that we expressed when we were together, Mrs. Unwin and I have more than once expressed since your departure, and have always felt it—that it had pleased Providence to appoint our habitations nearer to each other. This is a life of wishes, and they only are happy who have arrived where wishes cannot enter. We shall live now in hope of a second meeting, and a longer interview; which, if it please God to continue to you, and to Mr. King, your present measure of health, you will be able, I trust, to contrive hereafter. You did not leave us without en-

couragement to expect it; and I know that you do not raise expectations but with a sincere design to fulfil them.

Nothing shall be wanting, on our part, to accomplish in due time a journey to Perton-hall. But I am a strange creature, who am less able than any man living to project any thing out of the common course, with a reasonable prospect of performance. I have singularities, of which, I believe, at present you know nothing; and which would fill you with wonder, if you knew them. I will add, however, in justice to myself, that they would not lower me in your good opinion; though, perhaps, they might tempt you to question the soundness of my upper story. Almost twenty years have I been thus unhappily circumstanced; and the remedy is in the hand of God only. That I make you this partial communication on the subject, conscious, at the same time, that you are well worthy to

be entrusted with the whole, is merely because the recital would be too long for a letter, and painful both to me and to you. But all this may vanish in a moment; and, if it please God, it shall. In the mean time, my dear Madam, remember me in your prayers, and mention me at those times, as one whom it has pleased God to afflict with singular visitations.

How I regret, for poor Mrs. Unwin's sake, your distance! She has no friend suitable as you to her disposition and character, in all the neighbourhood. Mr. King, too, is just the friend and companion with whom I could be happy; but such grow not in this country. Pray tell him that I remember him with much esteem and regard; and, believe me, my dear Madam, with the sincerest affection,

Yours entirely,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 11, 1790.

That I may not seem unreasonably tardy in answering your last kind letter, I steal a few minutes from my customary morning business, (at present the translation of Mr. Van Lier's Narrative,) to inform you that I received it safe from the hands of Judith Hughes, whom we met in the middle of Hill-field. Desirous of gaining the earliest intelligence possible concerning Mrs. Newton, we were going to call on her, and she was on her way to us. It grieved us much that her news on that subject corresponded so little with our earnest wishes of Mrs. Newton's amendment. But if Dr. Benamer still gives hope of her recovery, it is not, I trust, without substantial reason for doing so; much less can I suppose that he would do it contrary to his own persuasions, because a thousand reasons that must influence, in such

a case, the conduct of a humane and sensible physician, concur to forbid it. If it shall please God to restore her, no tidings will give greater joy to us. In the mean time, it is our comfort to know, that in any event you will be sure of supports invaluable, and that cannot fail you; though, at the same time, I know well, that, with your feelings, and especially on so affecting a subject, you will have need of the full exercise of all your faith and resignation. To a greater trial no man can be called, than that of being a helpless eye-witness of the sufferings of one he loves, and loves tenderly. This I know by experience: but it is long since I had any experience of those communications from above, which alone can enable us to acquit ourselves, on such an occasion, as we ought. But it is otherwise with you, and I rejoice that it is so.

With respect to my own initiation into the secret of animal magnetism, I have a

thousand doubts. Twice, as you know, I have been overwhelmed with the blackest despair; and at those times every thing in which I have been at any period of my life concerned, has afforded to the enemy a handle against me. I tremble, therefore, almost at every step I take, lest on some future similar occasion it should yield him opportunity, and furnish him with means to torment me. Decide for me, if you can; and in the mean time, present, if you please, my respectful compliments and very best thanks to Mr. Hollo-way, for his most obliging offer. I am, perhaps, the only man living who would hesitate a moment, whether, on such easy terms, he should or should not accept it. But if he finds another like me, he will make a greater discovery than even that which he has already made of the principles of this wonderful art. For I take it for granted, that he is the gentleman whom you once mentioned, to me as indebted only to his own penetration for the knowledge of it.

I shall proceed, you may depend on it, with all possible dispatch in your business. Had it fallen into my hands a few months later, I should have made quicker riddance; for before the autumn shall be ended, I hope to have done with Homer. But my first morning hour or two (now and then a letter which must be written excepted) shall always be at your service till the whole is finished.

Commending you and Mrs. Newton, with all the little power I have of that sort, to His fatherly and tender care in whom you have both believed, in which friendly office I am fervently joined by Mrs. Unwin, I remain, with our sincere love to you both, and to Miss Catlett, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 17, 1790.

I received last night a copy of my subscribers' names from Johnson, in which I see how much I have been indebted to yours and to Mrs. Hill's solicitations. Accept my best thanks, so justly due to you both. It is an illustrious catalogue, in respect of rank and title; but methinks I should have liked it as well had it been more numerous. The sum subscribed, however, will defray the expense of printing; which is as much as, in these unsubscribing days, I had any reason to promise myself. I devoutly second your droll wish, that the booksellers may contend about me. The more the better. Seven times seven, if they please; and let them fight with the fury of Achilles,

> Till ev'ry rubric-post be crimson'd o'er
> With blood of booksellers, in battle slain,
> For me, and not a periwig untorn.

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Oct. 5, 1790.

I am truly concerned that you have so good an excuse for your silence. Were it proposed to my choice, whether you should omit to write through illness or indifference to me, I should be selfish enough, perhaps, to find decision difficult for a few moments; but have such an opinion, at the same time, of my affection for you, as to be verily persuaded that I should at last make a right option, and wish you rather to forget me than to be afflicted. But there is One, wiser and more your friend than I can possibly be, who appoints all your sufferings, and who, by a power altogether his own, is able to make them good for you.

I wish heartily that my verses had been more worthy of the Counterpane, their subject. The gratitude I felt, when you brought it

and gave it to me, might have inspired better; but a head full of Homer, I find, by sad experience, is good for little else. Lady Hesketh, who is here, has seen your gift, and pronounced it the most beautiful and best executed of the kind she ever saw.

I have lately received from my bookseller a copy of my subscribers' names, and do not find among them the name of Mr. Professor Martyn. I mention it, because you informed me, some time since, of his kind intention to number himself among my encouragers on this occasion; and because I am unwilling to lose, for want of speaking in time, the honour that his name will do me. It is possible, too, that he may have subscribed, and that his non-appearance may be owing merely to Johnson's having forgot to enter his name. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to ascertain the matter. The catalogue will be printed soon, and published in the Analytical Review, as the last and most effectual way

of advertising my Translation; and the name of the gentleman in question will be particularly serviceable to me in this first edition of it.

My whole work is in the booksellers' hands, and ought by this time to be in the press. The next spring is the time appointed for the publication. It is a genial season, when people who are ever good-tempered at all, are sure to be so; a circumstance well worthy of an author's attention, especially of mine, who am just going to give a thump on the outside of the critics' hive, that will probably alarm them all.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is on the whole rather improved in her health since we had the pleasure of your short visit; I should say, the pleasure of your visit, and the pain of its shortness.

I am, my dearest Madam,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 15, 1790.

We were surprised and grieved at Mrs. Scott's sudden departure; grieved, you may suppose, not for *her*, but for *him*, whose loss, except that in God he has an all-sufficient good, is irreparable. The day of separation between those who have loved long and well, is an awful day, inasmuch as it calls the Christian's faith and submission to the severest trial. Yet I account those happy, who, if they are severely tried, shall yet be supported, and be carried safely through. What would become of me on a similar occasion! I have one comfort, and only one: bereft of that, I should have nothing left to lean on; for my spiritual props have long since been struck from under me.

I have no objection at all to being known as the translator of Van Lier's Letters, when they shall be published. Rather, I am ambitious of

it, as an honour. It will serve to prove, that if I have spent much time to little purpose in the translation of Homer, some small portion of my time has, however, been well disposed of.

The honour of your preface prefixed to my Poems will be on my side; for surely, to be known as the friend of a much-favoured minister of God's word, is a more illustrious distinction, in reality, than to have the friendship of any poet in the world to boast of.

We sympathize truly with you under all your tender concern for Mrs. Newton, and with her in all her sufferings from such various and discordant maladies. Alas! what a difference have twenty-three years made in us, and in our condition! for just so long it is since Mrs. Unwin and I came into Buckinghamshire. Yesterday was the anniversary of that memorable æra. Farewell.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 26, 1790.

We should have been happy to have received from you a more favourable account of Mrs. Newton's health. Yours is indeed a post of observation, and of observation the most interesting. It is well that you are enabled to bear the stress and intenseness of it without prejudice to your own health, or impediment to your ministry.

The last time I wrote to Johnson, I made known to him your wishes to have your preface printed, and affixed, as soon as an opportunity shall offer; expressing, at the same time, my own desires to have it done. Whether I shall have any answer to my proposal, is a matter of much uncertainty; for he is always either too idle or too busy, I

know not which, to write to me. Should you happen to pass his way, perhaps it would not be amiss to speak to him on the subject; for it is easier to carry a point by six words spoken, than by writing as many sheets about it. I have asked him hither, when my cousin Johnson shall leave us, which will be in about a fortnight; and should he come, will enforce the measure myself.

A yellow shower of leaves is falling continually from all the trees in the country. A few moments only seem to have passed since they were buds; and in few moments more, they will have disappeared. It is one advantage of a rural situation, that it affords many hints of the rapidity with which life flies, that do not occur in towns and cities. It is impossible for a man, conversant with such scenes as surround me, not to advert daily to the shortness of his existence here, admonished of it, as he must be, by ten thou-

sand objects. There was a time when I could contemplate my present state, and consider myself as a thing of a day with pleasure; when I numbered the seasons as they passed in swift rotation, as a schoolboy numbers the days that interpose between the next vacation, when he shall see his parents and enjoy his home again. But to make so just an estimate of a life like this, is no longer in my power. The consideration of my short continuance here, which was once grateful to me, now fills me with regret.* I would live and live always, and am become such another wretch as Mæcenas was, who wished for long life, he cared not at what expense of sufferings. The only consolation left me on this subject is, that the voice of the Almighty can in one moment cure me of this mental infirmity. That He can, I know by experience; and there are reasons for which I ought to believe that He will. But from hope to despair is a transition that I have made so often, that

I can only consider the hope that may come, and that sometimes I believe will, as a short prelude of joy to a miserable conclusion of sorrow that shall never end. Thus are my brightest prospects clouded, and thus to me is hope itself become like a withered flower, that has lost both its hue and its fragrance.

I ought not to have written in this dismal strain to you, in your present trying situation, nor did I intend it. You have more need to be cheered than to be saddened; but a dearth of other themes constrained me to choose myself for a subject, and of myself I can write no otherwise.

Adieu, my dear friend. We are well; and, notwithstanding all that I have said, I am myself as cheerful as usual. Lady Hesketh is here, and in her company even I, except now and then for a moment, forget my sorrows.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Nov. 29, 1790.

I value highly, as I ought and hope that I always shall, the favourable opinion of such men as Mr. Martyn: though, to say the truth, their commendations, instead of making me proud, have rather a tendency to humble me, conscious as I am that I am over-rated. There is an old piece of advice, given by an ancient poet and satirist, which it behoves every man, who stands well in the opinion of others, to lay up in his bosom:—*Take care to be what you are reported to be.* By due attention to this wise counsel, it is possible to turn the praises of our friends to good account, and to convert that which might prove an incentive to vanity into a lesson of wisdom. I will keep your good and respectable friend's letter very safely, and restore it to you the first opportunity. I beg, my dear Madam, that you will pre-

sent my best compliments to Mr. Martyn, when you shall either see him next or write to him.

To that gentleman's enquiries I am, doubtless, obliged for the recovery of no small proportion of my subscription-list: for in consequence of his application to Johnson, and very soon after it, I received from him no fewer than forty-five names, that had been omitted in the last he sent me, and that would probably never have been thought of more. No author, I believe, has a more inattentive or indolent bookseller: but he has every body's good word for liberality and honesty; therefore I must be content.

The press proceeds at present as well as I can reasonably wish. A month has passed since we began, and I revised this morning the first sheet of the sixth Iliad. Mrs. Unwin begs to add a line from herself, so that I have

only room to subjoin my best respects to Mr. King, and to say that I am truly,

My dear Madam, yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 5, 1790.

Sometimes I am too sad, and sometimes too busy, to write. Both these causes have concurred lately to keep me silent. But more than by either of these I have been hindered, since I received your last, by a violent cold, which oppressed me during almost the whole month of November.

Your letter affected us with both joy and sorrow: with sorrow and sympathy respecting poor Mrs. Newton, whose feeble and dying state suggests a wish for her release, rather

than for her continuance; and joy on your account, who are enabled to bear, with so much resignation and cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, the prospect of a loss, which even they who know you best apprehended might prove too much for you. As to Mrs. Newton's interest in the best things, none, intimately acquainted with her as we have been, could doubt it. She doubted it indeed herself; but though it is not our duty to doubt, any more than it is our privilege, I have always considered the self-condemning spirit, to which such doubts are principally owing, as one of the most favourable symptoms of a nature spiritually renewed, and have many a time heard you make the same observation.

[*Torn off.*]

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Dec. 31, 1790.

Returning from my walk at half-past three, I found your welcome messenger in the kitchen; and entering the study, found also the beautiful present with which you had charged him.* We have all admired it (for Lady Hesketh was here to assist us in doing so;) and for my own particular, I return you my sincerest thanks, a very inadequate compensation. Mrs. Unwin, not satisfied to send you thanks only, begs your acceptance likewise of a turkey, which, though the figure of it might not much embellish a counterpane, may possibly serve hereafter to swell the dimensions of a feather-bed.

I have lately been visited with an indisposi-

* A patch-work counterpane of her own making.

tion much more formidable than that which I mentioned to you in my last—a nervous fever; a disorder to which I am subject, and which I dread above all others, because it comes attended by a melancholy perfectly insupportable. This is the first day of my complete recovery, the first in which I have perceived no symptoms of my terrible malady; and the only drawback on this comfort that I feel is the intelligence contained in yours, that neither Mr. King nor yourself are well. I dread always, both for my own health and for that of my friends, the unhappy influences of a year worn out. But, my dear Madam, this is the last day of it; and I resolve to hope that the new year shall obliterate all the disagreeables of the old one. I can wish nothing more warmly than that it may prove a propitious year to you.

My poetical operations, I mean of the occasional kind, have lately been pretty much at a

stand.' I told you, I believe, in my last, that Homer, in the present stage of the process, occupied me more intensely than ever.' He still continues to do so, and threatens, till he shall be completely finished, to make all other composition impracticable. I have, however, written the mortuary verses as usual; but the wicked clerk for whom I write them has not yet sent me the impression. I transmit to you the long-promised Catharina; and were it possible that I could transcribe the others, would send them also. There is a way, however, by which I can procure a frank, and you shall not want them long.

I remain, dearest Madam,

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 20, 1791.

Had you been a man of this world, I should have held myself bound, by the law of ceremonies, to have sent you long since my tribute of condolence. I have sincerely mourned with you; and though you have lost a wife, and I only a friend, yet do I understand too well the value of such a friend as Mrs. Newton, not to have sympathised with you very nearly. But you are not a man of this world; neither can you, who have both the Scripture and the Giver of Scripture to console you, have any need of aid from others, or expect it from such spiritual imbecility as mine. I considered, likewise, that receiving a letter from Mrs. Unwin, you, in fact, received one from myself, with this difference only,—that hers could not fail to be better adapted to the occasion, and

to your own frame of mind, than any that I could send you.

[*Torn off.*]

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 2, 1791.

I am sick and ashamed of myself that I forgot my promise; but it is actually true that I did forget it. You, however, I did not forget; nor did I forget to wonder and to be alarmed at your silence, being myself perfectly unconscious of my arrears. All this, together with various other trespasses of mine, must be set down to the account of Homer; and wherever he is, he is bound to make his apology to all my correspondents, but to you in particular. True it is, that if Mrs. Unwin did not call me from that pursuit, I should forget, in the ardour with which I persevere in it, both to eat and drink

and retire to rest. This zeal has encreased in me regularly as I have proceeded, and in an exact ratio, as a mathematician would say, to the progress I have made toward the point at which I have been aiming. You will believe this, when I tell you, that, not contented with my previous labours, I have actually revised the whole work, and have made a thousand alterations in it, since it has been in the press. I have now, however, tolerably well satisfied myself at least, and trust that the printer and I shall trundle along merrily to the conclusion. I expect to correct the proof-sheets of the third book of the Odyssey to-day.

Thus it is, as I believe I have said to you before, that you are doomed to hear of nothing but Homer from me. There is less of gallantry than of nature in this proceeding. When I write to you, I think of nothing but the subject that is uppermost, and that uppermost is always Homer. Then I consider that though, as a

lady, you have a right to expect other treatment at my hands, you are a lady who has a husband, and that husband an old schoolfellow of mine, and who, I know, interests himself in my success.

I am likely, after all, to gather a better harvest of subscribers at Cambridge than I expected. A little cousin of mine, an undergraduate of Caius' College, suggested to me, when he was here in the summer, that it might not be amiss to advertise the work at Merril's the bookseller. I acquiesced in the measure; and at his return he pasted me on a board, and hung me in the shop, as it has proved in the event, much to my emolument. For many, as I understand, have subscribed in consequence, and among the rest several of the College libraries.

I am glad that you have seen the last Northampton dirge, for the rogue of a clerk sent me

only half the number of printed copies for which I stipulated with him at first, and they were all expended immediately. The poor man himself is dead now; and whether his successor will continue me in my office, or seek another laureat, has not yet transpired.

I began with being ashamed, and I must end with being so. I am ashamed that, when I wrote by your messenger, I omitted to restore to you Mr. Martyn's letter. But it is safe, and shall be yours again. I am truly sorry that you have suffered so much this winter by your old complaint the rheumatism. We shall both, I hope, be better in a better season, now not very distant; for I have never, myself, been free from my fever since the middle of January; neither do I expect to be released till summer shall set me free.

I am, dear Madam,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 29, 1791.

It affords me sincere pleasure that you enjoy serenity of mind after your great loss. It is well in all circumstances, even in the most afflictive, with those who have God for their comforter. You do me justice in giving entire credit to my expressions of friendship for you. No day passes in which I do not look back to the days that are fled; and consequently, none in which I do not feel myself affectionately reminded of you, and of her whom you have lost for a season. I cannot even see Olney spire from any of the fields in the neighbourhood, much less can I enter the town, and still less the Vicarage, without experiencing the force of those mementos, and recollecting a multitude of passages, to which you and yours were parties.

The past would appear a dream, were the remembrance of it less affecting. It was in the most important respects so unlike my present moment, that I am sometimes almost tempted to suppose it a dream. But the difference between dreams and realities long since elapsed seems to consist chiefly in this, —that a dream, however painful or pleasant at the time, and perhaps for a few ensuing hours, passes like an arrow through the air, leaving no trace of its flight behind it; but our actual experiences make a lasting impression. We review those which interested us much, when they occurred, with hardly less interest than in the first instance; and whether few years or many have intervened, our sensibility makes them still present; such a mere nullity is time, to a creature to whom God gives a feeling heart and the faculty of recollection.

That you have not, the first sight, and sometimes, perhaps, have a late one, of what

I write, is owing merely to your distant situation. Some things I have written not worth your perusal; and a few, a very few, of such length, that, engaged as I have been to Homer, it has not been possible that I should find opportunity to transcribe them. At the same time, Mrs. Unwin's pain in her side has almost forbidden her the use of the pen. She cannot use it long without encreasing that pain; for which reason I am more unwilling than herself that she should ever meddle with it. But, whether what I write be a trifle, or whether it be serious, you would certainly, were you present, see them all. Others get a sight of them, by being so, who would never otherwise see them; and I should hardly withhold them from you, whose claim upon me is of so much older a date than theirs. It is not, indeed, with readiness and good-will that I give them to any body; for, if I live, I shall probably print them; and my friends, who are previously well acquainted with them, will

have the less reason to value the book in which they shall appear. A trifle can have nothing to recommend it but its novelty. I have spoken of giving copies; but, in fact, I have given none. They who have them made them; for, till my whole work shall have fairly passed the press, it will not leave me a moment more than is necessarily due to my correspondents. Their number has of late encreased upon me, by the addition of many of my maternal relations, who, having found me out about a year since, have behaved to me in the most affectionate manner, and have been singularly serviceable to me in the article of my subscription. Several of them are coming from Norfolk to visit me in the course of the summer.

I enclose a copy of my last mortuary verses. The clerk, for whom they were written, is since dead; and whether his successor, the late sexton, will choose to be his own dirge-

maker, or will employ me, is a piece of important news which has not yet reached me.

Our best remembrances attend yourself and Miss Catlett*, and we rejoice in the kind Providence that has given you, in her, so amiable and comfortable a companion.

Adieu, my dear friend—I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 24, 1791.

Considering the multiplicity of your engagements, and the importance, no doubt, of most of them, I am bound to set the higher value on your letters; and instead of grumbling that they come seldom, to be thankful to you

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* Now Mrs. Smith.

that they come at all. You are now going into the country, where, I presume, you will have less to do; and I am rid of Homer. Let us try, therefore, if in the interval between the present hour and the next busy season, (for I, too, if I live, shall probably be occupied again,) we can continue to exchange letters more frequently than for some time past.

You do justice to me and Mrs. Unwin, when you assure yourself that to hear of your health will give us pleasure: I know not, in truth, whose health and well-being could give us more. The years that we have seen together will never be out of our remembrance; and so long as we remember them, we must remember you with affection. In the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, you have laboured in every possible way to serve us; and we must have a short memory indeed for the kindness of a friend, could we, by any means, become forgetful of yours. It would grieve me more than it does,

to hear you complain of the effects of time, were not I also myself the subject of them. While he is wearing out you, and other dear friends of mine, he spares not me; for which I ought to account myself obliged to him, since I should otherwise be in danger of surviving all that I have ever loved—the most melancholy lot that can befal a mortal. God knows what will be my doom hereafter; but precious as life necessarily seems to a mind doubtful of its future happiness, I love not the world, I trust, so much as to wish a place in it when all my beloved shall have left it.

You speak of your late loss in a manner that affected me much; and when I read that part of your letter, I mourned with you, and for you. But surely, I said to myself, no man had ever less reason to charge his conduct to a wife with any thing blame-worthy. Thoughts of that complexion, however, are no doubt extremely natural on the occasion of such a loss;

and a man seems not to have valued sufficiently, when he possesses it no longer, what, while he possessed it, he valued more than life. I am mistaken, too, or you can recollect a time when you had fears, and such as became a Christian, of loving too much; and it is likely that you have even prayed to be preserved from doing so. I suggest this to you as a plea against those self-accusations, which I am satisfied that you do not deserve, and as an effectual answer to them all. You may do well, too, to consider, that had the deceased been the survivor, she would have charged herself in the same manner; and I am sure you will acknowledge, without any sufficient reason. The truth is, that you both loved at least as much as you ought, and I dare say had not a friend in the world who did not frequently observe it. To love just enough, and not a bit too much, is not for creatures who can do nothing well. If we fail in duties less arduous, how should we succeed in this, the most arduous of all?

I am glad to learn from yourself that you are about to quit a scene that probably keeps your tender recollections too much alive. Another place and other company may have their uses; and while your church is undergoing repair, its minister may be repaired also.

As to Homer, I am sensible that, except as an amusement, he was never worth my meddling with; but, as an amusement, he was to me invaluable. As such, he served me more than five years; and, in that respect, I know not where I shall find his equal. You oblige me by saying, that you will read him for my sake. I verily think that any person of a spiritual turn may read him to some advantage. He may suggest reflections that may not be unserviceable even in a sermon; for I know not where we can find more striking exemplars of the pride, the arrogance, and the insignificance of man; at the same

time that, by ascribing all events to a divine interposition, he inculcates constantly the belief of a Providence; insists much on the duty of charity towards the poor and the stranger; on the respect that is due to superiors, and to our seniors in particular; and on the expedience and necessity of prayer and piety toward the gods; a piety mistaken, indeed, in its object, but exemplary for the punctuality of its performance. Thousands, who will not learn from Scripture to ask a blessing either on their actions or on their food, may learn it, if they please, from Homer.

My Norfolk cousins are now with us. We are both as well as usual; and with our affectionate remembrances to Miss Catlett,

I remain, sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 22, 1791.

I did not foresee, when I challenged you to a brisker correspondence, that a new engagement of all my leisure was at hand;—a new, and yet an old one. An interleaved copy of my Homer arrived soon after from Johnson, in which he recommended it to me to make any alterations that might yet be expedient, with a view to another impression. The alterations that I make are indeed but few, and they are also short; not more, perhaps, than half a line in two thousand. But the lines are, I suppose, nearly forty thousand in all; and to revise them critically must consequently be a work of labour. I suspend it, however, for your sake, till the present sheet be filled, and that I may not seem to shrink from my own offer.

Mr. Bean has told me that he saw you at Bedford, and gave us your reasons for not coming our way. It is well, so far as your own comfortable lodging and our gratification were concerned, that you did not; for our house is brimful, as it has been all the summer, with my relations from Norfolk. We should all have been mortified, both you and we, had you been obliged, as you must have been, to seek a residence elsewhere.

I am sorry that Mr. Venn's labours below are so near to a conclusion. I have seen few men whom I could have loved more, had opportunity been given me to know him better. So, at least, I have thought as often as I have seen him. But when I saw him last, which is some years since, he appeared then so much broken, that I could not have imagined he would last so long. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy him, and Mr. Berridge, and your-

self; who have spent, and, while they last, will continue to spend your lives, in the service of the only Master worth serving; labouring always for the souls of men, and not to tickle their ears, as I do. But this I can say—God knows how much rather I would be the obscure tenant of a lath-and-plaster cottage, with a lively sense of my interest in a Redeemer, than the most admired object of public notice without it. Alas! what is a whole poem, even one of Homer's, compared with a single aspiration that finds its way immediately to God, though clothed in ordinary language, or perhaps not articulated at all. These are my sentiments as much as ever they were, though my days are all running to waste among Greeks and Trojans. The night cometh when no man can work; and if I am ordained to work to better purpose, that desirable period cannot be very distant. My day is beginning to shut in, as every man's must, who is on the verge of sixty.

All the leisure that I have had of late for thinking has been given to the riots at Birmingham. What a horrid zeal for the church, and what a horrid loyalty to government, have manifested themselves there! How little do they dream that they could not have dishonoured their idol the Establishment more, and that the great Bishop of souls himself with abhorrence rejects their service! But I have not time to enlarge;—breakfast calls me; and all my post-breakfast time must be given to poetry. Adieu!

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Aug. 4, 1791.

Your last letter, which gave us so unfavourable an account of your health, and which did not speak much more comfortably

of Mr. King's, affected us with much concern. Of Dr. Raitt we may say in the words of Milton:

> His long experience did attain
> To something like prophetic strain;

for as he foretold to you, so he foretold to Mrs. Unwin, that, though her disorders might not much threaten life, they would yet cleave to her to the last; and she and perfect health must ever be strangers to each other. Such was his prediction, and it has been hitherto accomplished. Either head-ache or pain in the side has been her constant companion ever since we had the pleasure of seeing you. As for myself, I cannot properly say that I *enjoy* a good state of health, though in general I have it, because I have it accompanied with frequent fits of dejection, to which less health and better spirits would, perhaps, be infinitely preferable. But it pleased God that I should be born in a country where

melancholy is the national characteristic. To say truth, I have often wished myself a Frenchman.

N. B. I write this in very good spirits.

You gave us so little hope in your last that we should have your company this summer at Weston, that to repeat our invitation seems almost like teasing you. I will only say, therefore, that my Norfolk friends having left us, of whose expected arrival here I believe I told you in a former letter, we should be happy could you succeed them. We now, indeed, expect Lady Hesketh, but not immediately: she seldom sees Weston till all its summer beauties are fled, and red, brown, and yellow, have supplanted the universal verdure.

My Homer is gone forth, and I can devoutly say—Joy go with it! What place it holds

in the estimation of the generality, I cannot tell, having heard no more about it since its publication than if no such work existed. I must except, however, an anonymous eulogium from some man of letters, which I received about a week ago. It was kind in a perfect stranger, as he avows himself to be, to relieve me, at so early a day, from much of the anxiety that I could not but feel on such an occasion. I should be glad to know who he is, only that I might thank him.

Mrs. Unwin, who is this moment come down to breakfast, joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King; and I am, my dear Madam,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. KING.

DEAR SIR, Sept. 23, 1791.

We are truly concerned at your account of Mrs. King's severe indisposition; and though you had no better news to tell us, are much obliged to you for writing to inform us of it, and to Mrs. King for desiring you to do it. We take a lively interest in what concerns her. I should never have ascribed her silence to neglect, had she neither written to me herself, nor commissioned you to write for her. I had, indeed, for some time expected a letter from her by every post, but accounted for my continual disappointment by supposing her at Edgeware, to which place she intended a visit, as she told me long since, and hoped that she would write immediately on her return.

Her sufferings will be felt here till we learn that they are removed; for which reason we

shall be much obliged by the earliest notice of her recovery, which we most sincerely wish, if it please God, and which will not fail to be a constant subject of prayer at Weston.

I beg you, Sir, to present Mrs. Unwin's and my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. King, in which you are equally a partaker, and to believe me, with true esteem and much sincerity,

Yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 21, 1791.

You could not have sent me more agreeable news than that of your better health, and I am greatly obliged to you for making me the first of your correspondents to whom you have given that welcome intelligence. This is

a favour which I should have acknowledged much sooner, had not a disorder in my eyes, to which I have always been extremely subject, required that I should make as little use of my pen as possible. I felt much for you, when I read that part of your letter in which you mention your visitors, and the fatigue which, indisposed as you have been, they could not fail to occasion you. Agreeable as you would have found them at another time, and happy as you would have been in their company, you could not but feel the addition they necessarily made to your domestic attentions as a considerable inconvenience. But I have always said, and shall never say otherwise, that if patience under adversity, and submission to the afflicting hand of God, be true fortitude—which no reasonable person can deny—then your sex have ten times more true fortitude to boast than ours; and I have not the least doubt that you carried yourself with infinitely more equanimity on that occasion than I should have done, or any he of my ac-

quaintance. Why is it, since the first offender on earth was a woman, that the women are nevertheless, in all the most important points, superior to the men? That they are so, I will not allow to be disputed, having observed it ever since I was capable of making the observation. I believe, on recollection, that when I had the happiness to see you here, we agitated this question a little; but I do not remember that we arrived at any decision of it. The Scripture calls you the *weaker vessels;* and perhaps the best solution of the difficulty, therefore, may be found in those other words of Scripture—*My strength is perfected in weakness.* Unless you can furnish me with a better key than this, I shall be much inclined to believe that I have found the true one.

I am deep in a new literary engagement, being retained by my bookseller as editor of an intended most magnificent publication of Milton's Poetical Works. This will occupy me as

much as Homer did for a year or two to come; and when I have finished it, I shall have run through all the degrees of my profession, as author, translator, and editor. I know not that a fourth could be found; but if a fourth can be found, I dare say I shall find it.

I remain, my dear Madam, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 16, 1791.

I am weary of making you wait for an answer, and therefore resolve to send you one, though without the lines you ask for. Such as they are, they have been long ready; and could I have found a conveyance for them, should have been with you weeks ago. Mr. Bean's

last journey to town might have afforded me an opportunity to send them; but he gave me not sufficient notice. They must, therefore, be still delayed, till either he shall go to London again, or somebody else shall offer. I thank you for yours, which are as much better than mine, as gold is better than feathers.

It seemed necessary that I should account for my apparent tardiness to comply with the obliging request of a lady, and of a lady who employed you as her intermedium. None was wanted, as you well assured her. But had there been occasion for one, she could not possibly have found a better.

I was much pleased with your account of your visit to Cowslip Green; both for the sake of what you saw there, and because I am sure you must have been as happy in such company, as any situation in this world can make you. Miss More has been always employed, since I

first heard of her doings, as becomes a Christian. So she was, while endeavouring to reform the unreformable great; and so she is, while framing means and opportunities to instruct the more tractable little. Horace's *Virginibus, puerisque,* may be her motto; but in a sense much nobler than he has annexed to it. I cannot, however, be entirely reconciled to the thought of her being henceforth silent, though even for the sake of her present labours. A pen useful as hers ought not, perhaps, to be laid aside: neither, perhaps, will she altogether renounce it, but when she has established her schools, and habituated them to the discipline she intends, will find it desirable to resume it. — I rejoice that she has a sister like herself, capable of bidding defiance to fatigue and hardship, to dirty roads and wet raiment, in so excellent a cause.

I beg that when you write next to either of those ladies, you will present my best compli-

ments to Miss Martha, and tell her that I can never feel myself flattered more than I was by her application. God knows how unworthy I judge myself, at the same time, to be admitted into a collection* of which you are a member. Were there not a crowned head or two to keep me in countenance, I should even blush to think of it.

I would that I could see some of the mountains which you have seen; especially, because Dr. Johnson has pronounced that no man is qualified to be a poet who has never seen a mountain. But mountains I shall never see, unless, perhaps, in a dream, or unless there are such in heaven. Nor those, unless I receive twice as much mercy as ever yet was shown to any man.

* Of autographs.

I am now deep in Milton, translating his Latin Poems for a pompous edition, of which you have undoubtedly heard. This amuses me for the present, and will for a year or two. So long, I presume, I shall be occupied in the several functions that belong to my present engagement.

Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as usual; always mindful of you, and always affectionately so. Our united love attends yourself and Miss Catlett.

Believe me most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Jan. 26, 1792.

Silent as I have long been, I have had but too good a reason for being so. About six weeks since, Mrs. Unwin was seized

with a sudden and most alarming disorder, a vertigo, which would have thrown her out of her chair to the ground, had I not been quick enough to catch her while she was falling. For some moments her knees and ancles were so entirely disabled, that she had no use of them; and it was with the exertion of all my strength that I replaced her in her seat. Many days she kept her bed, and for some weeks her chamber; but, at length, has joined me again in the study. Her recovery has been extremely slow, and she is still feeble; but, I thank God, not so feeble but that I hope for her perfect restoration as the spring advances. I am persuaded that, with your feelings for your friends, you will know how to imagine what I must have suffered on an occasion so distressing, and to pardon a silence owing to such a cause.

The account you give me of the patience with which a lady of your acquaintance has

lately endured a terrible operation, is a strong proof that your sex surpasses ours in heroic fortitude. I call it by that name, because I verily believe that, in God's account, there is more true heroism in suffering His will with meek submission, than in doing our own, or that of our fellow-mortals who may have a right to command us, with the utmost valour that was ever exhibited in a field of battle. Renown and glory are, in general, the incitements to such exertions; but no laurels are to be won by sitting patiently under the knife of a surgeon. The virtue is, therefore, of a less suspicious character; the principle of it more simple, and the practice more difficult:—considerations that seem sufficiently to warrant my opinion, that the infallible Judge of human conduct may possibly behold with more complacency a suffering, than an active courage.

I forget if I told you that I am engaged

for a new edition of Milton's Poems. In fact, I have still other engagements; and so various, that I hardly know to which of them all to give my first attentions. I have only time, therefore, to condole with you on the double loss you have lately sustained, and to congratulate you on being female; because, as such, you will, I trust, acquit yourself well under so severe a trial.

I remain, my dear Madam,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 20, 1792.

When I wrote the lines in question, I was, as I almost always am, so pressed for time, that I was obliged to put them down in a great hurry. Perhaps I printed them wrong. If a full stop be made at the end of the second

line, the appearance of inconsistency, perhaps, will vanish: but should you still think them liable to that objection, they may be altered thus:—

In vain to live from age to age
We modern bards endeavour;
But write in Patty's book one page,*
You gain your point for ever.

Trifling enough, I readily confess they are; but I have always allowed myself to trifle occasionally; and on this occasion had not, nor have at present, time to do more. By the way, should you think this amended copy

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* In the third volume of the Poems, the lines stand thus, on a farther suggestion of Lady Hesketh:—

In vain to live from age to age,
While modern bards endeavour,
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point for ever.

W. Cowper.

March 6, 1792.

worthy to displace the former, I must wait for some future opportunity to send you them properly transcribed for the purpose.

Your demand of more original composition from me, will, if I live, and it please God to afford me health, in all probability be sooner or later gratified. In the mean time, you need not, and if you turn the matter in your thoughts a little, you will perceive that you need not, think me unworthily employed in preparing a new edition of Milton. His two principal poems are of a kind that call for an editor who believes the gospel, and is well grounded in all evangelical doctrine. Such an editor they have never had yet, though only such a one can be qualified for the office.

We mourn for the mismanagement at Botany Bay, and foresee the issue. The Romans were, in their origin, banditti; and if they became in time masters of the world, it was

not by drinking grog, and allowing themselves in all sorts of licentiousness. The African colonization, and the manner of conducting it, has long been matter to us of pleasing speculation. God has highly honoured Mr. Thornton; and I doubt not that the subsequent history of the two settlements will strikingly evince the superior wisdom of his proceedings.

Yours,

W. C.

P. S. Lady Hesketh made the same objection to my verses as you; but she being a lady-critic, I did not heed her. As they stand at present, however, they are hers; and I believe you will think them much improved.

My heart bears me witness how glad I shall be to see you at the time you mention; and Mrs. Unwin says the same.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 4, 1792.

All our little world is going to London, the gulph that swallows most of our good things, and, like a bad stomach, too often assimilates them to itself. Our neighbours at the Hall go thither to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, as we lately called them, but now Sir John and my Lady, are no longer inhabitants here, but henceforth of Bucklands, in Berkshire. I feel the loss of them, and shall feel it, since kinder or more friendly treatment I never can receive at any hands, than I have always found at theirs. But it has long been a foreseen change, and was, indeed, almost daily expected long before it happened. The desertion of the Hall, however, will not be total. The second bro-

ther, George, now Mr. Courtenay,* intends to reside there; and with him, as with his elder brother, I have always been on terms the most agreeable.

Such is this variable scene: so variable, that, had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connection; and, to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those who, like you, have God for their companion. Death cannot deprive them of Him, and he changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, you could not have endured the loss you mention.

* And since, Sir George Throckmorton.

May He preserve me from a similar one; at least, till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again! Then, if ever that day come, it will make me equal to any burthen; but at present I can bear nothing well.

I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, March 8, 1792.

Having just finished all my Miltonic translations, and not yet begun my comments, I find an interval that cannot be better employed than in discharging arrears due to my correspondents, of whom I begin first a letter to you, though your claim be of less ancient standing than those of all the rest.

I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and especially that your

indisposition has been attended with such excessive pain. But may I be permitted to observe, that your going to church on Christmas-day, immediately after such a sharp fit of rheumatism, was not according to the wisdom with which I believe you to be endued, nor was it acting so charitably toward yourself as I am persuaded you would have acted toward another. To another you would, I doubt not, have suggested that text—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice,"—as implying a gracious dispensation, in circumstances like yours, from the practice of so severe and dangerous a service.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, is better; but still wants much of complete restoration. We have reached a time of life when heavy blows, if not fatal, are at least long felt.

I have received many testimonies concerning my Homer, which do me much honour,

and afford me great satisfaction; but none from which I derive, or have reason to derive, more than that of Mr. Martyn. It is of great use to me, when I write, to suppose some such person at my elbow, witnessing what I do; and I ask myself frequently—Would this please him? If I think it would, it stands: if otherwise, I alter it. My work is thus finished, as it were, under the eye of some of the best judges, and has the better chance to win their approbation when they actually see it.

I am, my dear Madam,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1792.

We are now once more reduced to our dual state, having lost our neighbours at the

Hall, and our inmate Lady Hesketh. Mr. Rose, indeed, has spent two or three days here, and is still with us; but he leaves us in the afternoon. There are those in the world whom we love, and whom we are happy to see; but we are happy likewise in each other, and so far independent of our fellow-mortals, as to be able to pass our time comfortably without them:—as comfortably, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indispositions, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit. When I am much distressed, any company but hers distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings; though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise; and by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure.—On the whole, I believe I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation to be determined by my own election; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the total absence of the chief of all.

W—— called on me, I forget when, but about a year ago. His errand was to obtain from me a certificate of his good behaviour during the time he had lived with us. His conduct in our service had been such, for sobriety and integrity, as entitled him to it; and I readily gave him one. At the same time, I confess myself not at all surprised that the family to which you recommended him soon grew weary of him. He had a bad temper, that always sat astride on a runaway tongue, and ceased not to spur and to kick it into all the sin and mischief that such an ungovernable member, so ridden, was sure to fall into. Whether he be a Christian, or not, is no business of mine to determine. There was a time when he seemed to have Christian experience, and there has been a much longer time in which, his attendance on ordinances excepted, he has manifested, I doubt, no one symptom of the Christian character. Prosperity did him harm; adversity, perhaps, may do him good. I wish it may; and if he be in-

deed a pupil of divine grace, it certainly will, when he has been sufficiently exercised with it; of which he seems, at present, to have a very promising prospect.

Adieu, my dear friend. I remain affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 15, 1792.

I thank you for your remittance; which, to use the language of a song much in use when we were boys,

> Adds fresh beauties to the spring,
> And makes all nature look more gay.

What the author of the song had particularly in view when he thus sang, I know not; but

probably it was not the sum of fifty pounds; which, as probably, he never had the happiness to possess. It was, most probably, some beautiful nymph,—beautiful in his eyes, at least,—who has long since become an old woman.

I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. First, from a sensible little man, curate of a neighbouring village*; then from Walter Bagot; then from Henry Cowper; and now from you. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it.

* Rev. John Buchanan.

Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse,
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers;

But, male for female is a trope,
Or rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope,
When he translated Homer.

Having translated all the Latin and Italian Miltonics, I was proceeding merrily with a Commentary on the Paradise Lost, when I was seized, a week since, with a most tormenting disorder; which has qualified me, however, to make some very feeling observations on that passage, when I shall come to it;

———Ill fare our ancestor impure.

For this we may thank Adam; — and you may thank him, too, that I am not able to fill my sheet, nor endure a writing posture any longer. I conclude abruptly, therefore;

but sincerely subscribing myself, with my best compliments to Mrs. Hill,

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR MR. BULL, July 25, 1792.

Engaged as I have been ever since I saw you, it was not possible that I should write sooner; and busy as I am at present, it is not without difficulty that I can write even now: but I promised you a letter, and must endeavour, at least, to be as good as my word. How do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days? In sitting, not on cockatrice eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humour, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would, therefore, bring a painter

from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days; and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over. You have now, I know, a burning curiosity to learn two things, which I may choose whether I will tell you or not. First, who was the painter; and secondly, how he has succeeded. The painter's name is Abbot. You never heard of him, you say. It is very likely; but there is, nevertheless, such a painter, and an excellent one he is. *Multa sunt quæ bonus Bernardus nec vidit, nec audivit.* To your second enquiry I answer, that he has succeeded to admiration. The likeness is so strong, that when my friends enter the room where the picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not. Miserable man that you are, to be at Brighton instead of being here, to contemplate this prodigy of art, which, therefore, you can never see; for it goes to London next Monday, to be suspended awhile at Abbot's; and then proceeds into Norfolk, where it will be suspended for ever.

But the picture is not the only prodigy I have to tell you of. A greater belongs to me; and one that you will hardly credit, even on my own testimony. We are on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very day se'nnight we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother bard, Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows where, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my friend, that we may have a safe going and return. It is a tremendous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I think of it. But a promise, made to him when he was here, that we would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that we can if we will, oblige us to it. The journey and the change of air, together with the novelty to us of the scene to which we are going, may, I hope, be useful to us both; especially to Mrs. Unwin, who has most need of restoratives. She sends her love to you and to Thomas, in which she is sincerely joined by

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 30, 1792.

Like you, I am obliged to snatch short opportunities of corresponding with my friends; and to write what I can, not what I would. Your kindness in giving me the first letter after your return, claims my thanks; and my tardiness to answer it would demand an apology, if, having been here, and witnessed how much my time is occupied in attendance on my poor patient, you could possibly want one. She proceeds, I trust, in her recovery; but at so slow a rate, that the difference made in a week is hardly perceptible to me, who am always with her. This last night has been the worst she has known since her illness—entirely sleepless till seven in the morning. Such ill rest seems but an indifferent prepa-

ration for a long journey, which we purpose to undertake on Wednesday, when we set out for Eartham, on a visit to Mr. Hayley. The journey itself will, I hope, be useful to her; and the air of the sea, blowing over the South Downs, together with the novelty of the scene to us, will, I hope, be serviceable to us both. You may imagine that we, who have been resident on one spot so many years, do not engage in such an enterprise without some anxiety. Persons accustomed to travel, would make themselves merry with mine; it seems so disproportioned to the occasion. Once I have been on the point of determining not to go, and even since we fixed the day; my troubles have been so insupportable. But it has been made a matter of much prayer, and at last it has pleased God to satisfy me, in some measure, that his will corresponds with our purpose, and that He will afford us his protection. You, I know,

will not be unmindful of us during our absence from home; but will obtain for us, if your prayers can do it, all that we would ask for ourselves—the presence and favour of God, a salutary effect of our journey, and a safe return.

I rejoiced, and had reason to do so, in your coming to Weston, for I think the Lord came with you. Not, indeed, to abide with me; not to restore me to that intercourse with Him which I enjoyed twenty years ago; but to awaken in me, however, more spiritual feeling than I have experienced, except in two instances, during all that time. The comforts that I had received under your ministry, in better days, all rushed upon my recollection; and, during two or three transient moments, seemed to be in a degree renewed. You will tell me that, transient as they were, they were yet evidences of a love that is not so; and I am desirous to believe it.

With Mrs. Unwin's warm remembrances, and my cousin Johnson's best compliments, I am

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

P. S.—If I hear from you while I am abroad, your letter will find me at William Hayley's Esq., Eartham, near Chichester. We purpose to return in about a month.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

DEAR MADAM, Eartham, Sept. 1792.

Your two counsellors are of one mind. We both are of opinion that you will do well to make your second volume a suitable companion to the first, by embellishing it in the same manner; and have no doubt, considering the well-deserved popularity of your verse,

that the expense will be amply refunded by the public.

I would give you, Madam, not my counsel only, but consolation also, were I not disqualified for that delightful service by a great dearth of it in my own experience. I too often seek, but cannot find it. Of this, however, I can assure you, if that may at all comfort you, that both my friend Hayley and myself most truly sympathise with you under all your sufferings. Neither have you, I am persuaded, in any degree lost the interest you always had in him, or your claim to any service that it may be in his power to render you. Had you no other title to his esteem, his respect for your talents, and his feelings for your misfortunes, must insure to you the friendship of such a man for ever. I know, however, there are seasons when, look which way we will, we see the same dismal gloom enveloping all objects. This is itself an afflic-

tion; and the worse, because it makes us think ourselves more unhappy than we are: and at such a season it is, I doubt not, that you suspect a diminution of our friend's zeal to serve you.

I was much struck by an expression in your letter to Hayley, where you say that you "will endeavour to take an interest in green leaves again." This seems the sound of my own voice reflected to me from a distance. I have so often had the same thought and desire; a day scarcely passes, at this season of the year, when I do not contemplate the trees so soon to be stript, and say, "Perhaps I shall never see you clothed again." Every year, as it passes, makes this expectation more reasonable; and the year with me cannot be very distant, when the event will verify it. Well, may God grant us a good hope of arriving in due time where the leaves never fall, and all will be right!

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is a little better than when you saw her; but still so feeble as to keep me in a state of continual apprehension. I live under the point of a sword suspended by a hair. Adieu, my dear Madam; and believe me to remain your sincere and affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY,* WESTON-UNDERWOOD.

MY DEAR CATHARINA, Eartham, Sept. 10, 1792.

I am not so uncourteous a knight as to leave your last kind letter, and the last I hope that I shall receive for a long time to come, without an attempt, at least, to acknowledge and to send you something in the shape of an answer to it; but having been obliged to dose myself last night with laudanum, on account of a

* Now Lady Throckmorton.

little nervous fever, to which I am always subject, and for which I find it the best remedy, I feel myself this morning particularly under the influence of Lethean vapours, and, consequently, in danger of being uncommonly stupid!

You could hardly have sent me intelligence that would have gratified me more than that of my two dear friends, Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, having departed from Paris two days before the terrible 10th of August. I have had many anxious thoughts on their account; and am truly happy to learn that they have sought a more peaceful region, while it was yet permitted them to do so. They will not, I trust, revisit those scenes of tumult and horror while they shall continue to merit that description. We are here all of one mind respecting the cause in which the Parisians are engaged; wish them a free people, and as happy as they can wish themselves. But their conduct has not always pleased us: we are shocked

at their sanguinary proceedings, and begin to fear, myself in particular, that they will prove themselves unworthy, because incapable of enjoying it, of the inestimable blessings of liberty. My daily toast is, Sobriety and freedom to the French; for they seem as destitute of the former, as they are eager to secure the latter.

We still hold our purpose of leaving Eartham on the 17th; and again my fears on Mrs. Unwin's account begin to trouble me; but they are now not quite so reasonable as in the first instance. If she could bear the fatigue of travelling then, she is more equal to it at present; and supposing that nothing happens to alarm her, which is very probable, may be expected to reach Weston in much better condition than when she left it. Her improvement, however, is chiefly in her looks, and in the articles of speaking and walking; for she can neither rise from her chair without help, nor walk without a support; nor read, nor use her needles. Give

my love to the good Doctor, and make him acquainted with the state of his patient, since he, of all men, seems to have the best right to know it.

I am proud that you are pleased with the Epitaph I sent you, and shall be still prouder to see it perpetuated by the chisel. It is all that I have done since here I came, and all that I have been able to do. I wished, indeed, to have requited Romney for his well-drawn copy of me, in rhime; and have more than once or twice attempted it: but I find, like the man in the fable, who could leap only at Rhodes, that verse is almost impossible to me, except at Weston.—Tell my friend George that I am every day mindful of him, and always love him; and bid him by no means to vex himself about the tardiness of Andrews.* Remember me affec-

* A stone-mason, who was making a pedestal for an antique bust of Homer.

tionately to William, and to Pitcairn, whom I shall hope to find with you at my return; and should you see Mr. Buchanan, to him also. I have now charged you with commissions enow, and having added Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, and told you that I long to see you again, will conclude myself,

My dear Catharina,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Oct. 14, 1792.

Your kind enquiries after mine and Mrs. Unwin's health will not permit me to be silent; though I am and have long been so indisposed to writing, that even a letter has almost overtasked me.

Your last but one found me on the point of setting out for Sussex, whither I went with

Mrs. Unwin, on a visit to my friend, Mr. Hayley. We spent six weeks at Eartham, and returned on the twentieth of September. I had hopes that change of air and change of scene might be serviceable both to my poor invalid and me. She, I hope, has received some benefit; and I am not the worse for it myself; but, at the same time, must acknowledge that I cannot boast of much amendment. The time we spent there could not fail to pass as agreeably as her weakness, and my spirits, at a low ebb, would permit. Hayley is one of the most agreeable men, as well as one of the most cordial friends. His house is elegant; his library large, and well chosen; and he is surrounded by the most delightful scenery. But I have made the experiment only to prove, what indeed I knew before, that creatures are physicians of little value, and that health and cure are from God only. Henceforth, therefore, I shall wait for those blessings from Him, and expect them at no other hand.

In the mean time, I have the comfort to be able to tell you that Mrs. Unwin, on the whole, is restored beyond the most sanguine expectations I had when I wrote last; and that, as to myself, it is not much otherwise with me than it has been these twenty years; except that this season of the year is always unfavourable to my spirits.

I rejoice that you have had the pleasure of another interview with Mr. Martyn; and am glad that the trifles I have sent you afforded him any amusement. This letter has already given you to understand, that I am at present no artificer of verse; and that, consequently, I have nothing new to communicate. When I have, I shall do it to none more readily than to yourself.

My dear Madam,

Very affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 18, 1792.

I thought that the wonder had been all on my side, having been employed in wondering at your silence, as long as you at mine. Soon after our arrival at Eartham, I received a letter from you, which I answered, if not by the return of the post, at least in a day or two. Not that I should have insisted on the ceremonial of letter for letter, during so long a period, could I have found leisure to double your debt; but while there, I had no opportunity for writing, except now and then a short one; for we breakfasted early, studied Milton as soon as breakfast was over, and continued in that employment till Mrs. Unwin came forth from her chamber, to whom all the rest of my time was necessarily devoted. Our return to Weston was on

the nineteenth of last month, according to your information. You will naturally think that, in the interval, I must have had sufficient leisure to give you notice of our safe arrival. But the fact has been otherwise. I have neither been well myself, nor is Mrs. Unwin, though better, so much improved in her health, as not still to require my continual assistance. My disorder has been the old one, to which I have been subject so many years, and especially about this season—a nervous fever; not, indeed, so oppressive as it has sometimes proved, but sufficiently alarming both to Mrs. Unwin and myself, and such as made it neither easy nor proper for me to make much use of my pen, while it continued. At present I am tolerably free from it; a blessing for which I believe myself partly indebted to the use of James's powder, in small quantities; and partly to a small quantity of laudanum, taken every night; but chiefly to a manifestation of God's presence vouchsafed

to me a few days since; transient, indeed, and dimly seen, through a mist of many fears and troubles, but sufficient to convince me, at least while the Enemy's power is a little restrained, that He has not cast me off for ever.

Our visit was a pleasant one; as pleasant as Mrs. Unwin's weakness, and the state of my spirits, never very good, would allow. As to my own health, I never expected that it would be much improved by the journey; nor have I found it so. Some benefit, indeed, I hoped; and, perhaps, a little more than I found. But the season was, after the first fortnight, extremely unfavourable, stormy and wet; and the prospects, though grand and magnificent, yet rather of a melancholy cast, and consequently not very propitious to me. The cultivated appearance of Weston suits my frame of mind far better than wild hills that aspire to be mountains, covered

with vast unfrequented woods, and here and there affording a peep between their summits at the distant ocean. Within doors all was hospitality and kindness, but the scenery *would* have its effect; and though delightful in the extreme to those who had spirits to bear it, was too gloomy for me.

Yours, my dear friend,

Most sincerely,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Nov. 5, 1792.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have finished the Sonnet which I told you I had begun, and sent it to Hayley, who is well pleased *therewith*, and has by this time transmitted it to whom it most concerns.*

---

* Sonnet to George Romney, Esq. on his picture of him in crayons.

I would not give the algebraist sixpence for his encomiums on my Task, if he condemns my Homer, which, I know, in point of language is equal to it, and in variety of numbers superior. But the character of the former having been some years established, he follows the general cry; and should Homer establish himself as well, and I trust he will hereafter, I shall have his warm suffrage for that also. But if not—it is no matter. Swift says somewhere,—There are a few good judges of poetry in the world, who lend their taste to those who have none: and your man of figures is probably one of the borrowers.

Adieu—in great haste. Our united love attends yourself and yours, whose I am most truly and affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 11, 1792.

I am not so insensible of your kindness in making me an exception from the number of your correspondents, to whom you forbid the hope of hearing from you till your present labours are ended, as to make you wait longer for an answer to your last; which, indeed, would have had its answer before this time, had it been possible for me to write. But so many have demands upon me of a similar kind, and while Mrs. Unwin continues an invalid, my opportunities of writing are so few, that I am constrained to incur a long arrear to some, with whom I would wish to be punctual. She can at present neither work nor read; and till she can do both, and amuse herself as usual, my own amusements of the pen must be suspended.

I, like you, have a work before me, and a work to which I should be glad to address myself in earnest, but cannot do it at present. When the opportunity comes, I shall, like you, be under a necessity of interdicting some of my usual correspondents, and of shortening my letters to the excepted few. Many letters and much company are incompatible with authorship, and the one as much as the other. It will be long, I hope, before the world is put in possession of a publication, which you design should be posthumous.

Oh for the day when your expectations of my complete deliverance shall be verified! At present it seems very remote: so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse with which I was favoured about a month since, has never been repeated; and the depression of my spirits has. The future appears gloomy as ever; and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark,

among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push me headlong. Thus I have spent twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty years more. Long ere that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or woe will be decided.

Adieu, my dear friend. I have exhausted my time, though not filled my paper.

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 9, 1792.

You need not be uneasy on the subject of Milton. I shall not find that labour too heavy for me, if I have health and leisure. The season of the year is unfavourable to me respecting the former; and Mrs. Unwin's pre-

sent weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. But the business is in no haste. The artists employed to furnish the embellishments are not likely to be very expeditious; and a small portion only of the work will be wanted from me at once; for the intention is to deal it out to the public piece-meal. I am, therefore, under no great anxiety on that account. It is not, indeed, an employment that I should have chosen for myself; because poetry pleases and amuses me more, and would cost me less labour properly so called. All this I felt before I engaged with Johnson; and did, in the first instance, actually decline the service: but he was urgent; and, at last, I suffered myself to be persuaded.

The season of the year, as I have already said, is particularly adverse to me: yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other; but the approach of it always reminds me of

the same season in the dreadful seventy-three, and in the more dreadful eighty-six. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions; nor is the Enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then, whether encreasing years have made me more liable to it, or despair, the longer it lasts, grows naturally darker, I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless He interpose powerfully in my favour, all may know.

I remain, my dear friend,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Jan. 31, 1793.

Io Pæan!

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Even as you foretold, so it came to pass. On Tuesday I received your letter, and on Tuesday came the pheasants; for which I am indebted in many thanks, as well as Mrs. Unwin, both to your kindness and to your kind friend Mr. Copeman.

> In Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell,—
> "Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well:"
> And when his clerkship's out, I wish him herds
> Of golden clients for his golden birds.

Our friends the Courtenays have never dined with us since their marriage, *because* we have never asked them; and we have never asked them, *because* poor Mrs. Unwin is not so equal to the task of providing for and entertaining company as before this last illness. But this

is no objection to the arrival here of a bustard; rather it is a cause for which we shall be particularly glad to see the monster. It will be a handsome present to *them*. So let the bustard come, as the Lord Mayor of London said to the hare, when he was hunting,—let her come, a' God's name: I am not afraid of her.

Adieu, my dear cousin and caterer. My eyes terribly bad; else I had much more to say to you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 29, 1793.

Your tidings concerning the 'slender pittance yet to come, are, as you observe, of the melancholy cast. Not being gifted by na-

ture with the means of acquiring much, it is well, however, that she has given me a disposition to be contented with little. I have now been so many years habituated to small matters, that I should probably find myself incommoded by greater; and may I but be enabled to shift, as I have been hitherto, unsatisfied wishes will never trouble me much. My pen has helped me somewhat; and, after some years' toil, I begin to reap the benefit. Had I begun sooner, perhaps I should have known fewer pecuniary distresses; or, who can say? It is possible that I might not have succeeded so well. Fruit ripens only a short time before it rots; and man, in general, arrives not at maturity of mental powers at a much earlier period. I am now busied in preparing Homer for his second appearance. An author should consider himself as bound not to please himself, but the public; and so far as the good pleasure of the public may be learned from the critics, I design to

accommodate myself to it. The Latinisms, though employed by Milton, and numbered by Addison among the arts and expedients by which he has given dignity to his stile, I shall render into plain English; the rougher lines, though my reason for using them has never been proved a bad one, so far as I know, I shall make perfectly smooth; and shall give body and substance to all that is in any degree feeble and flimsy. And when I have done all this, and more, if the critics still grumble, I shall say the very deuce is in them. Yet, that they will grumble, I make no doubt; for, unreasonable as it is to do so, they all require something better than Homer, and that something they will certainly never get from me.

As to the canal that is to be my neighbour, I hear little about it. The Courtenays of Weston have nothing to do with it, and I have no intercourse with Tyringham. When it is finished, the people of these parts will have

to carry their coals seven miles only, which now they bring from Northampton or Bedford, both at the distance of fifteen. But, as Balaam says, who shall live when these things are done? It is not for me, a sexagenarian already, to expect that I shall. The chief objection to canals in general seems to be, that, multiplying as they do, they are likely to swallow the coasting trade.

I cannot tell you the joy I feel at the disappointment of the French; pitiful mimics of Spartan and Roman virtue, without a grain of it in their whole character.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 25, 1793.

Had it not been stipulated between us, that, being both at present pretty much engrossed by business, we should write when opportunity offers, I should be frighted at the date of your last; but you will not judge me, I know, by the unfrequency of my letters; nor suppose that my thoughts about you are equally unfrequent. In truth, they are not. No day passes in which you are excluded from them. I am so busy that I do not expect even now to fill my paper. While I write, my poor invalid, who is still unable to amuse herself either with book or needle, sits silent at my side; which makes me, in all my letters, hasten to a conclusion. My only time for study is now before breakfast; and I lengthen it as much as I can, by rising early.

I know not that, with respect to our health, we are either better or worse than when you

saw us. Mrs. Unwin, perhaps, has gained a little strength; and the advancing spring, I hope, will add to it. As to myself, I am, in body, soul, and spirit, *semper idem.* Prayer, I know, is made for me; and sometimes with great enlargement of heart, by those who offer it; and in this circumstance consists the only evidence I can find, that God is still favourably mindful of me, and has not cast me off for ever.

A long time since, I received a parcel from Dr. Cogshall, of New York; and, looking on the reverse of the packing-paper, saw there an address to you. I conclude, therefore, that you received it first, and at his desire transmitted it to me; consequently you are acquainted with him, and, probably, apprised of the nature of our correspondence. About three years ago I had his first letter to me, which came accompanied by half a dozen American publications. He proposed an exchange of books on religious subjects, as likely

to be useful on both sides of the water. Most of those he sent, however, I had seen before. I sent him, in return, such as I could get; but felt myself indifferently qualified for such a negotiation. I am now called upon to contribute my quota again; and shall be obliged to you if, in your next, you will mention the titles of half a dozen that may be procured at little cost, that are likely to be new in that country, and useful.

About two months since, I had a letter from Mr. Jeremiah Waring, of Alton in Hampshire. Do you know such a man? I think I have seen his name in advertisements of mathematical works. He is, however, or seems to be, a very pious man.

I was a little surprised lately, seeing in the last Gentleman's Magazine a letter from somebody at Winchester, in which is a copy of the epitaph of our poor friend Unwin: an

English, not a Latin one. It has been pleasant to me sometimes to think, that his dust lay under an inscription of my writing; which I had no reason to doubt, because the Latin one, which I composed at the request of the executors, was, as I understood from Mr. H. Thornton, accepted by them and approved. If they thought, after all, that an English one, as more intelligible, would therefore be preferable, I believe they judged wisely; but having never heard that they had changed their mind about it, I was at a loss to account for the alteration.

So now, my dear friend, adieu!—When I have thanked you for a barrel of oysters, and added our united kind remembrances to yourself, and Miss Catlett, I shall have exhausted the last moment that I can spare at present.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 12, 1793.

You promise to be contented with a short line, and a short one you must have, hurried over in the little interval I have happened to find between the conclusion of my morning task and breakfast. Study has this good effect, at least: it makes me an early riser, who might otherwise, perhaps, be as much given to dozing as my readers.

The scanty opportunity I have, I shall employ in telling you what you principally wish to be told—the present state of mine and Mrs. Unwin's health. In her I cannot perceive any alteration for the better; and must be satisfied, I believe, as indeed I have great reason to be, if she does not alter for the worse. She uses the orchard-walk daily, but

always supported between two, and is still unable to employ herself as formerly. But she is cheerful, seldom in much pain, and has always strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God.

As to myself, I have always the same song to sing—Well in body, but sick in spirit; sick, nigh unto death.

> Seasons return, but not to me returns
> God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
> Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
> Or joy, or hope, or Jesus' face divine;
> But cloud, &c.

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tone, and accompany him through the whole passage, on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his; but time fails me.

I feel great desire to see your intended publication; a desire which the manner in which Mr. Bull speaks of it, who called here

lately, has no tendency to allay. I believe I forgot to thank you for your last poetical present: not because I was not much pleased with it, but I write always in a hurry, and in a hurry must now conclude myself, with our united love,

Yours, my dear friend,

Most sincerely,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Aug. 2, 1793.

The Bishop of Norwich has won my heart by his kind and liberal behaviour to you; and, if I knew him, I would tell him so.

I am glad that your auditors find your voice strong and your utterance distinct; glad, too, that your doctrine has hitherto made you no enemies. You have a gracious Master, who,

it seems, will not suffer you to see war in the beginning. It will be a wonder, however, if you do not, sooner or later, find out that sore place in every heart which can ill endure the touch of apostolic doctrine. Somebody will smart in his conscience, and you will hear of it. I say not this, my dear Johnny, to terrify, but to prepare you for that which is likely to happen, and which, troublesome as it may prove, is yet devoutly to be wished; for, in general, there is little good done by preachers till the world begins to abuse them. But understand me aright. I do not mean that you should give them unnecessary provocation, by scolding and railing at them, as some, more zealous than wise, are apt to do. That were to deserve their anger. No; there is no need of it. The self-abasing doctrines of the gospel will, of themselves, create you enemies; but remember this, for your comfort, they will also, in due time, transform them into friends, and make them love you, as if

they were your own children. God give you many such; as, if you are faithful to his cause, I trust he will!

'Sir John and Lady Thockmorton have lately arrived in England, and are now at the Hall. They have brought me from Rome a set of engravings on Odyssey subjects, by Flaxman, whom you have heard Hayley celebrate. They are very fine, very much in the antique stile, and a present from the Dowager Lady Spencer.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Oct. 22, 1793.

You are very kind to apologize for a short letter, instead of reproaching me with having been so long entirely silent. I per-

suaded myself, however, that while you were on your journey, you would miss me less as a correspondent than you do when you are at home, and therefore allowed myself to pursue my literary labours only, but still purposing to write as soon as I should have reason to judge you returned to London. Hindrances, however, to the execution even of that purpose, have interposed; and at this moment I write in the utmost haste, as indeed I always do, partly because I never begin a letter till I am already fatigued with study, and partly through fear of interruption before I can possibly finish it.

I rejoice that you have travelled so much to your satisfaction. As to me, my travelling days, I believe, are over. Our journey of last year was less beneficial, both to Mrs. Unwin's health and my spirits, than I hoped it might be; and we are hardly rich enough to migrate in quest of pleasure merely.

I thank you much for your last publication, which I am reading, as fast as I can snatch opportunity, to Mrs. Unwin. We have found it, as far as we have gone, both interesting and amusing; and I never cease to wonder at the fertility of your invention, that, shut up as you were in your vessel, and disunited from the rest of mankind, could yet furnish you with such variety, and with the means, likewise, of saying the same thing in so many different ways.*

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

* The publication alluded to is entitled, "Letters to a Wife; written during three voyages to Africa, from 1750 to 1754. By the Author of Cardiphonia."

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dec. 10, 1793.

You mentioned, my dear friend, in your last letter, an unfavourable sprain that you had received, which you apprehended might be very inconvenient to you for some time to come; and having learned also from Lady Hesketh the same unwelcome intelligence, in terms still more alarming than those in which you related the accident yourself, I cannot but be anxious, as well as my cousin, to know the present state of it; and shall truly rejoice to hear that it is in a state of recovery. Give us a line of information on this subject, as soon as you can conveniently, and you will much oblige us.

I write by morning candle-light; my literary business obliging me to be an early riser. Homer demands me: finished, indeed, but the

alterations not transcribed; a work to which I am now hastening as fast as possible. The transcript ended, which is likely to amount to a good sizeable volume, I must write a new preface; and then farewell to Homer for ever! And if the remainder of my days be a little gilded with the profits of this long and laborious work, I shall not regret the time that I have bestowed on it.

I remain, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

Can you give us any news of Lord Howe's Armada; concerning which we may enquire, as our forefathers did of the Spanish,—"An in cœlum sublata sit, an in Tartarum depressa?"

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